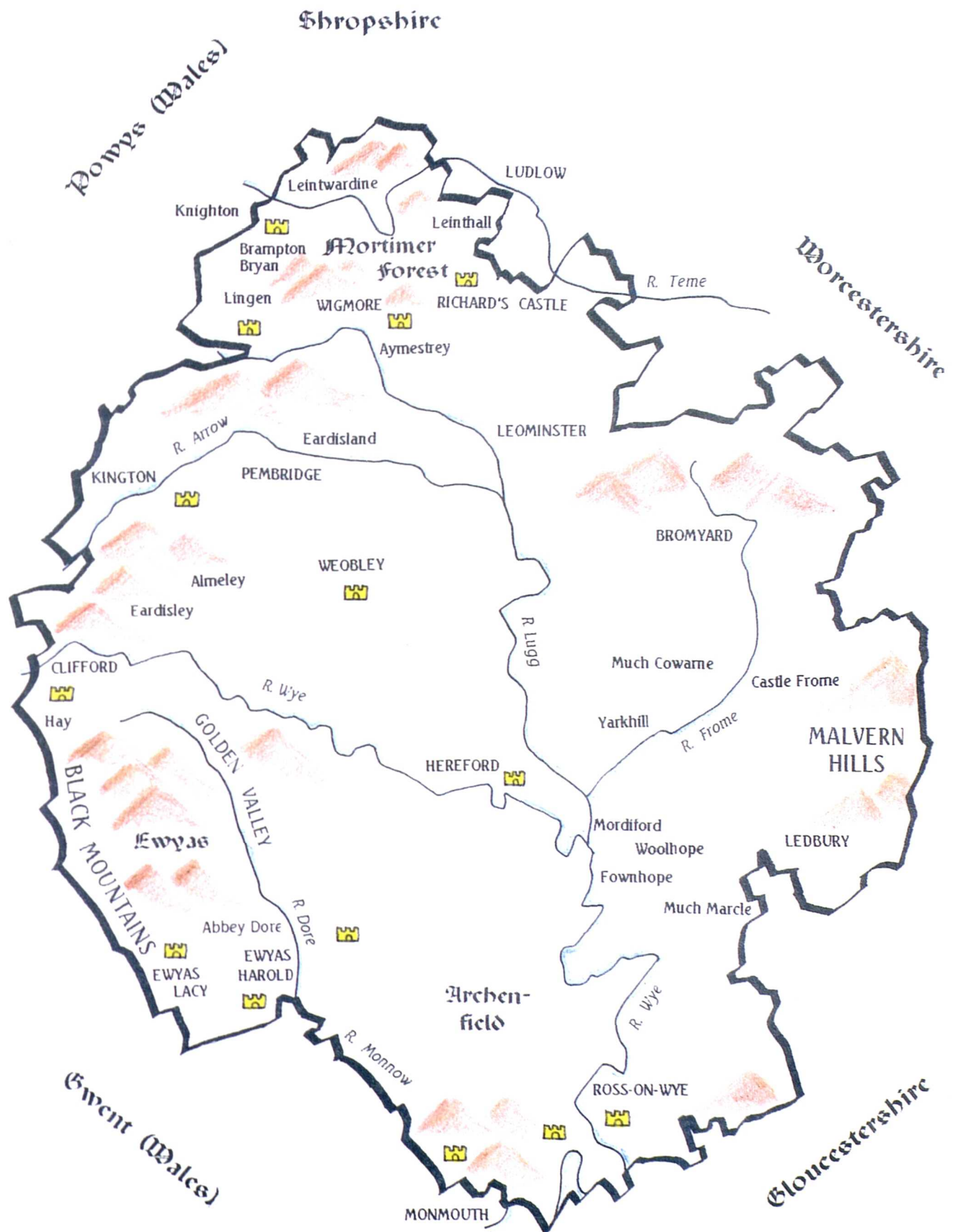


Herefordshire



STUDIES IN THE DIALECT MATERIALS OF
MEDIEVAL HEREFORDSHIRE

Vol I

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation into the medieval dialect of the pre-1974 county of Herefordshire. The main source materials consist of a group of literary texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, localized in the Herefordshire area by linguistic means. The study builds on the methodology developed in connection with the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986), but goes far beyond it both in its analysis of the individual texts and in using the data for descriptive and interpretative study. The aim is to contextualize and evaluate the evidence, as well as to gain a broad view of the characteristics of the dialect, including both diatopic and diachronic patterns and developments.

In order to assess their value as evidence, a detailed dialect analysis is carried out for each individual text; as part of this process, the *Atlas* localizations are reviewed, taking into consideration the full material now available, and various linguistic and textual questions are discussed. A set of dialect criteria for the localization of texts within Herefordshire and the South-West Midland area is defined. While the study focuses on the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century materials, comparisons with earlier and later periods are made. Several thirteenth-century literary texts are discussed in detail, including the well-known 'AB-language' and the two manuscripts of *The Owl and the Nightingale*; the material is further related to the available evidence for the Old, Early Modern and Present-Day English periods.

A series of studies of specific areas of grammar and phonology are carried out, covering topics such as the changes affecting the systems of gender, case and number since the Old English period, and the developments of the Early Middle English front rounded vowels, and of Germanic *a*. A language contact-based explanation of the Old English sound-change known as 'second fronting' is suggested. The linguistic patterns are related to the external history of the dialect, including geographical, political and settlement patterns, language contact with Welsh, and social/economic factors.

The thesis is accompanied by four appendices, which reproduce the linguistic data collected for the study, organized both by text (linguistic profiles) and by feature (item lists)

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PREFACE

This work began in 1992, as one of two regional studies of Middle English started that year, on the suggestion of Jeremy Smith, who had for some time been making his undergraduate students aware of the need for a large-scale Middle English grammar project. Since then, the number of related ongoing studies has doubled or tripled, and it is hoped that further developments on the project will become reality in the future.

I have received the following financial assistance for this work: a three-year postgraduate scholarship from the Scottish Office Education Department (1992-95), a three-year Eglinton Fellowship (1992-95), and a £300 Research Support Award from the Faculty of Arts, University of Glasgow to cover the purchase of microfilms and photocopying costs. In 1995, I also received an ERASMUS grant for a three-month study stay in Helsinki.

The primary source materials - some thirty medieval manuscripts - have mainly been studied from microfilms. Many of these belong to the collection of Edinburgh University Library, to which thanks are due for making them available for study. Others have been supplied by the repositories: the British Library, the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library and the Parker library (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge). The staff at the Parker Library were particularly helpful during a visit in 1996. Special thanks are due to archivist A M Wherry of the County Record Office, Hereford, for her patience and assistance during the last four years, both in correspondence and during visits.

All dialect maps are based on the material published in the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986), except for modifications to the Herefordshire material based on the findings of the present study. That the debt owed by the present work, as by any contemporary study of Middle English dialects, to the *Atlas* and its daughter projects goes far beyond the use of its

published data, will be obvious throughout the study.

The greatest intellectual debt is, however, to Jeremy Smith and Michael Samuels, who enticed me into the historical study of English in the first place, and whose teaching has shaped my views on language and provided the theoretical basis for this work. As my supervisor, Jeremy Smith has constantly provided inspiring and knowledgeable guidance, for which I am immensely grateful.

I would also like to thank the following people for their help. Above all, Katie Lowe has been unfailingly generous with help and advice, both intellectual and practical; she has discussed many of the arguments in this thesis with me (whether agreeing with them or not), helped me in innumerable great and small practical matters (from help in checking references to the loan of a laptop for travelling), and generally cheered up my existence. Margaret Laing also provided invaluable advice and help during the early stages. Most people at the English Language department have been helpful in one way or another; in particular, Christian Kay has given me more encouragement and practical help than I feel I have deserved. I would also like to thank the *Historical Thesaurus* team, in particular Cerwyss Ower, Flora Edmonds and Rachel Bell, for their patience and support.

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The most important thanks, finally, are due to my husband, Ron, who has remained encouraging despite an unfair amount of exposure to Middle English, provided most of the practical requisites, especially as regards computing, and in general had the patience of Job. If I felt that a thesis should have a dedication, it would have to be to him and his cats.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

General

AB	dialect of MSS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge 402 and Bodley 34 ('AB-language')
<i>allit</i>	alliterative use
BL	British Library
CMS	Central Midland Standard
EME	Early Middle English
EModE	Early Modern English
EML	East Midland(s)
fol(s)	folio(s)
Gmc	Germanic
<i>LAEME</i>	<i>Linguistic Atlas of Early Medieval English</i> (see Bibliography)
<i>LALME</i>	<i>Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English</i> (see Bibliography)
LME	Late Middle English
LP	Linguistic Profile
LWS	Late West Saxon
ME	Middle English
<i>MED</i>	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> (see Bibliography)
ModE	Modern English
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
NML	North Midland(s)
OE	Old English
PDE	Present-Day English
r	recto, as in fol 33r
<i>rh</i>	rhyming use
<i>SED</i>	<i>Survey of English Dialects</i> (see Bibliography)
SWML	South-West Midland(s)
v	verso, as in fol 33v
VP	Vespasian Psalter Gloss
WML	West Midland(s)

Grammatical

acc	accusative	neut	neuter
aj	adjective	nom	nominative
art	article	prep	preposition
av	adverb	pa	past tense
cj	conjunction	pl	plural
cp	comparative	pn	pronoun
dat	dative	part	participle
def	definite	pr	present tense
fem	feminine	sg	singular
gen	genitive	sp	superlative
ger	gerund	st	strong
inf	infinitive	subj	subjunctive
ind	indicative	vb	verb
masc	masculine	wk	weak
n	noun		

Symbols used in the representation of linguistic data

C	consonant
D	dental consonant (<i>t, d, þ</i>)
N	nasal consonant (<i>m, n</i>)
V	vowel
^	syncope (in present 2 and 3 sg verb forms)
R	flourished <r> in manuscript

PART I

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to study the medieval dialect of the southern borderlands against Wales, or, in pre-1974 terms, the county of Herefordshire. The enquiry is based on a group of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century literary texts, localizable in the area by linguistic means, and supplemented with earlier and later materials. The main tasks will be to define a reliable body of data by contextualising and evaluating the evidence, and to use this material for an interpretative study of the dialect.

The former task entails carrying out a detailed dialect analysis of each text; while the main purpose is to assess the evidence for the Herefordshire dialect, a number of points of more general textual or linguistic interest will also be considered. The second stage, building on the first, aims to achieve the following:

- 1) to define a set of dialect criteria for the localization of texts within Herefordshire and the South-West Midland area;
- 2) to relate the material to the available evidence for the OE, EME and ModE periods, including a detailed study of the EME materials;
- 3) to study the diatopic and diachronic development of the dialect, focusing on specific areas of grammar and phonology;
- 4) to relate the data to the external history of the dialect.

The methodology employed in the study is largely based on that originally developed by Professors McIntosh and Samuels in conjunction with the production of *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (henceforth *LALME*). It builds on the general framework and material defined by the *Atlas*, but goes beyond it in two respects. The fuller coverage and more detailed analysis of the material in the present study, as well as access to the whole picture of ME dialects provided by *LALME* in its finished form,

make possible a refinement and development of the earlier work. The aims of the present work are also fundamentally different from those of *LALME*: while the latter established a basic typology for ME dialects, the aim here is to take the further step of describing and interpreting the data (see discussion in 2.2, especially p 29; also p 59). The study is intended as a contribution towards a major new initiative in Middle English language studies recently begun at Glasgow.

The importance of the Middle English period

The special interest of the Middle English (henceforth ME) period (*ca* 1150-1500) for the historical study of language derives from the unique historical circumstances after the Norman Conquest, when English temporarily lost official status as a written language, and came to lack a centralized model for orthography. The period *ca* 1350-1450, in particular, provides a large body of written material that reflects dialectal variation. The full potential of this material for dialect study has become evident only relatively recently. Earlier views (e.g. Toikien 1929: 104-105) tended to regard only a small fraction of the ME literary output, consisting of authorial holographs or texts otherwise considered dialectally 'pure', as worthy of study; the majority of the texts were considered to contain more or less confused 'nonce-languages', resulting from their textual transmission and of little evidential value.

It is now held, however, that such *Mischsprachen* are relatively untypical of the ME material, and that ME scribes often produced a regionally consistent usage, containing orderly variation rather than random mixtures. The development of a methodology for the analysis and localization of such consistent texts, in connection with the *LALME* project, has led to an enormous expansion of the available body of material for the study of ME dialects.¹ The potential thus exists for a new large-scale enquiry into Middle English, taking advantage of the available methodology and material. A first important step was the publication of the *Atlas* itself, which provides the necessary basis and framework for subsequent study. Corresponding ground-work for the earlier period, aimed at the production of a *Linguistic Atlas of Early Medieval English* (henceforth

LAEME) is ongoing in Edinburgh, and a first volume, a *Catalogue of Sources*, has been published (Laing 1993). As a next stage following on the *Atlas* work, a set of individual studies of different regional varieties of ME has been envisaged, along the lines of the pioneering study of the Lincolnshire dialect by Margaret Laing (1978); the present thesis belongs to a series of such studies initiated in Glasgow.

Preliminaries: context and mode

The precise delimitations of the present enquiry, as well as the methodology and theoretical concepts relevant for it, will be set out and discussed in the following sections. Certain fundamental theoretical assumptions should, however, be stated from the outset.

The view held here is that language as an object of study is inseparable from its external context. As it is essentially a social phenomenon, it cannot be properly understood without reference to society; moreover, its immediate context of use, including, on the most basic level, its mode of transmission, should never be lost sight of. In the case of the study of a regional dialect, such a statement may seem obvious; however, it has two important implications for the present work. The first is a general point, and needs no particular elaboration: the study of a variety, medieval or modern, cannot be carried out in isolation, but must take into account both the intra- and extralinguistic context, including factors like synchronic variation and contact between systems; the traditional model of direct descent, modified only by rule-bound intrasystemic change, is thus insufficient.

The second point concerns the use of evidence, and will require a brief discussion. Compared with present-day dialectology and sociolinguistics, the study of past stages of language faces a number of limitations with implications for its methodology. Firstly, up to the late nineteenth century, all the evidence consists of written language; secondly, the material is limited by chance survival, with little scope for the selection of informants. The various external factors taken into consideration in modern language study, such as age or social situation, are generally beyond control, and

even approximate dating and geographical setting are frequently uncertain. Accordingly, the linguistic study of a past stage of language must, in the first hand, be a study of the evidence; this point has recently been made by Smith (1996: 15):

[It is] important not to draw linguistic conclusions from textual data without first subjecting the texts to careful examination. ‘Every text has its own history’ could be taken as the key axiom which underlies - or should underlie - philological practice. To refer simply to diatopic... and diachronic... variation in texts is not enough; texts need to be contextualised, so that the true status of the information they contain may be ascertained.

Such a contextualization will form a major part of the present study. Most importantly, each text to be used as evidence will be submitted to a detailed study, and the eventual interpretation of the data will be directly related to the assessment of the dialectal character and evidential value of the texts. The principle that ‘every text has its own history’ might thus be considered the theme of the present study.

As the evidence consists entirely of written materials, while historical language study traditionally focuses on the spoken language, a first step towards a contextualization of the evidence must be a clarification of the relationship between the written and spoken modes. First of all, it is important to note that speech and writing are distinct manifestations of language, and form separate, although interrelated systems: thus, variation in writing does not necessarily reflect a corresponding variation in speech, or vice versa. At the same time, as Smith (1996: 16) points out, ‘there is an obvious connection between the written and the spoken modes, because both are manifestations of (i.e. transmission-mechanisms for) the “same” language’; in other words, the two modes interact, and there is a general, if not absolute, correspondence between graphemic and phonemic distinctions.

The first point, that speech and writing form distinct, and partially independent, systems, is of fundamental importance for the *LALME* methodology. In earlier scholarship, written forms tended to be regarded as worthy of study only for the information they provided about the spoken language. In a series of important articles,

Angus McIntosh (1956, 1974, 1975) argued that written language should be studied in its own right, and showed that purely orthographic forms could display patterns of dialectal distribution independent of spoken usage. This approach has proved revolutionary in several ways. As the actual written forms, rather than postulated underlying spoken ones, have been made the primary subject of investigation, the high level of abstraction inherent in the latter approach is avoided, and the direct study of the data permits a more exact and confident observation of patterns and correspondences. In practice, this has made possible a much more sophisticated typology of regional variation in ME than would have been considered realistic earlier.

However, the second point stated above is equally valid, and cannot be ignored in the interpretation of the data. The written and spoken modes are constantly interacting, and a living form of language cannot be studied as though 'all its users were deaf and dumb' (McIntosh 1956 [1989]: 11). Even though the written form must be the primary object of investigation, the study of a historical stage of language cannot ignore the relationship between the two modes. To relate developments in one mode to those in the other is a process that belongs strictly to the interpretative stage, and must be approached with caution; however, without this process, the study would be both less relevant and less exciting.

2 THE SOURCES

2.1 Definition of the material: area, timespan and selection of texts

The area

The selection of Herefordshire as the geographical focus of the present study was directed by certain guidelines, which may briefly be accounted for. In view of the network character of the *LALME* evidence (see p 22), it was deemed desirable to begin the planned series of individual studies from peripheral areas, on the principle that the ends of a dialect continuum provide a certain geographical fixity that may later be built upon when areas in the middle come to be considered. The Southwest Midland area was deemed to be of particular interest for several reasons. In *LALME*, the area is well covered; it is also one of the few areas for which a relatively large quantity of early material survives, providing excellent opportunities for diachronic comparison. The external circumstances are also potentially interesting from the point of view of linguistic development: the medieval Southwest Midland area provides wide-ranging variation in terms of geography, population density and distribution of wealth, as well as a political and linguistic border to the west, with possible implications of language contact.

The choice of Herefordshire is partly dictated by its extreme ‘end of continuum’ situation, partly by purely personal interest. To focus on a relatively small area was considered desirable in order to keep the overall quantity of material within manageable limits; however, while the main source material will be restricted to texts localized in Herefordshire, the study will inevitably spill over into the surrounding areas, and much of the discussion, especially in chapters 5 and 6, will be relevant for the Southwest Midlands area as a whole.

Some definition of geographical concepts is needed. The county of

Herefordshire is taken to be that of the pre-1974 division, now the western half of the county of Hereford and Worcester. Boundary changes between the Domesday Book and 1974 were minor, and, for the present purpose, the medieval and modern (pre-1974) counties may be taken as coterminous. In view of the nature of the evidence, boundaries cannot be taken literally; the correspondence of the *LALME* network of localized texts with the geographical map is only partial, and texts placed near county borders cannot with certainty be assigned to either side (see p 22). The Herefordshire material is here taken to consist of the texts listed under the county in *LALME*.

Reference will frequently be made to the Southwest Midlands (SWML): this is taken to include the southern parts of Shropshire and Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, W Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and, possibly, the western extreme of Oxfordshire. Sometimes the ‘core Southwest-Midland area’ is referred to; this comprises Herefordshire, Worcestershire and N Gloucestershire. This usage, which roughly follows dialectal and geographical patterns, has been adopted for convenience, and should not be taken to imply a definitive statement about dialectal groupings.

Types of material

The material to be used as the basis of the study should, as far as possible, consist of mutually comparable texts that can be used as a single body of evidence, without the risk of confusing diatopic variation with differences of other kinds. All the texts should, therefore, meet with a number of preset criteria. They should not represent too widely different types of evidence; further, they should belong within a defined and reasonably short timespan; and they should provide a sufficient quantity of material to be statistically relevant. Finally, there should be good grounds for accepting them as evidence for Herefordshire usage; this will involve both the selection of reliably localized texts, and the detailed analysis of each text to assess its dialectal structure and value as evidence.

Because of the limitations of the available material, such criteria are not easy to meet. To set up too strict limits means giving up much valuable evidence; on the other hand, too loose an acceptance of different materials may result in lack of clarity or

misleading patterns. The solution would seem to be to define the above criteria fairly loosely, and to delimit a main body of texts that will provide a reasonable quantity of material without stretching the limits of mutual comparability too far.

The available linguistic material can be divided into three main groups: onomastic evidence, documentary texts and literary texts.² In the past, medieval dialect study has mainly been concerned with the first two types, as well as a small minority of the third type, in particular authorial holographs. As noted above, the development of new methods in connection with the *LALME* project has radically altered the situation, making available a large body of literary texts localizable by linguistic means.

The present study will not include onomastic material; this type of evidence is highly specialized and should be studied separately. An English Place-name Society survey of Herefordshire has as yet not been published; the work is currently being carried out by John Freeman. Two studies based on ME onomastic evidence, by Gillis Kristensson (1987) and Bertil Sundby (1963), are highly relevant for the present study; both use the evidence of Lay Subsidy Rolls, and cover the West Midland counties and Worcestershire respectively. Reference will be made to these studies in chapter 6.

As material for linguistic study, literary and documentary texts each have certain advantages, as well as drawbacks. Literary texts provide large quantities of evidence, generally of a full and varied kind; however, the frequency of occurrence of particular items can vary greatly between texts, and analysis of very large quantities of text is generally required in order to provide compatible material. Furthermore, they can seldom be dated or localized reliably on external grounds. Documentary texts tend to be short and are often formulaic; on the other hand, when available in large numbers, they can provide large quantities of material for a limited number of forms, making them especially valuable for typological purposes. They also tend to be precisely dated and related to particular locations.

The two types of text cannot generally be expected to provide good material for comparison with each other: in particular, such linguistic items that typically occur in documents do not necessarily coincide with those most abundantly attested in literary texts. Both types are used as evidence in *LALME*; however, they play significantly different roles in the process of building up the network of localized texts.

The localization of texts in *LALME* is based on the so-called ‘fit-technique’, explained most fully in Benskin (1991a). In short, any dialectally consistent text that provides a reasonable quantity of material can be localized in relation to other such texts. Such ‘localizable’ texts tend to be literary; documentary texts seldom provide enough material for a satisfactory localization on linguistic grounds. However, there appear to be good grounds to believe that the linguistic usage of documents generally reflects that of the location they relate to (see Laing 1991: 28; Benskin 1977: 501-502). Documents can, accordingly, be used as ‘anchor texts’ to provide definite geographical points of reference on the dialect map; using a predetermined set of linguistic criteria, the localizable texts may, then, be placed in relation to these. It may be noted that the localizations are relative, and have no direct correspondence with exact locations on the ‘real’ geographical map, other than in relation to the anchor texts; however, the technique is self-refining, and the precision increases with the number of texts added to the network.

For a study that aims to build on the methods developed in *LALME*, the choice of primary material would stand between documentary and literary texts; while the two **types of text require very different methods of analysis, both provide suitable material.** For the present study, the selection of area dictates literary texts as the only possible choice. The surviving medieval documentary texts connected with Herefordshire are extremely scanty, and no self-contained study could be built upon their evidence. Apart from the fifteen documents listed in the *LALME* Index of sources (*LALME* I: 199-200), a handful of local letters and deeds are held in the Hereford Record Office; these are found mainly among the Hereford City Records and Mayors’ Records, belong chiefly to the late fifteenth century and contain few dialectal forms. Even assuming that further examples of Herefordshire documents are scattered in other repositories, the total number must be very small. It will, accordingly, be most sensible to limit the primary source material of the present study entirely to literary texts.

The selection of texts

The literary material listed in *LALME* as source material for Herefordshire is divided into ‘mapped sources’ and ‘associated literary manuscripts’ (see *LALME* I: 199-200). The former group consists of those texts which have been localized and used as evidence in *LALME*; these are contained in 25 manuscripts. The second group consists of five manuscripts, all of which either contain a mixed usage with a Herefordshire element or cannot be localized with any precision. As these latter texts are unlikely to provide reliable material, and were therefore left unmapped in *LALME*, a renewed assessment would be of little relevance for the present study. Similarly, other texts in which elements of Herefordshire usage have been identified, but which were not included in the *LALME* material, will be left out of consideration here; as the aim is to analyse a set of texts in detail, it will make sense to limit the study to texts that have been unconditionally localized in the area.

It should next be considered whether all the Herefordshire mapped sources should be included in the analysis, or whether the material should be further delimited. To begin with, the precise timespan of the study should be defined. A terminal point to medieval dialect study is provided by the spread of a written standard during the mid- and late fifteenth century. As the bulk of the available material belongs to the fifteenth century, it seems sensible to include this period in the study; then, if all texts are to be mutually comparable, the material should not include too early texts. A timespan of no more than 150 years is suggested by Margaret Laing (1991: 27-28) with reference to the early ME *Atlas* project (*LAEME*; see pp 15-16 above):

A span of about 150 years is the most that can be covered without the problem arising that diachronic changes in the language may confuse the pattern produced by synchronic regional variation. Even so, chronology has constantly to be borne in mind and comparison is particularly difficult in this period of rapid and far-reaching linguistic change.

The timespan of *LAEME* is set to cover the 150 years from 1150 to 1300. The later period covered by *LALME* involves, in theory, a timespan of a hundred years: 1325-1425 for the southern part and 1350-1450 for the northern part (*LALME* I: 3). However, in the case of the Herefordshire material at least, the timespan is in reality considerably wider. Some very early texts are included in *LALME*, notably the thirteenth-century MS Oxford, Jesus College 29 (see *LALME* I: 25). On the other extreme, the material also includes late fifteenth-century texts, e.g. MS Oxford, Bodleian Douce 78 and MS Oxford, St John's College 6 (see pp 131, 215), both dated to the third quarter of the century. The span from the earliest to the latest texts thus adds up to about two hundred years.

This broad timespan is not entirely unproblematic; in particular, the presence of six thirteenth-century texts in the southern material, and the large proportion of early material in certain counties, e.g. Gloucestershire, sometimes suggests regional patterns that may instead reflect diachronic change. Accordingly, if the main body of material used in the present study is to consist of mutually comparable texts, at least the thirteenth-century material used in *LALME* should probably be excluded. In practice, this entails the exclusion of one of the *LALME* Herefordshire texts, MS Jesus 29, from the main material.

The main body of material will thus consist of the *LALME* mapped Herefordshire texts that date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; this will entail a timespan of about 150 years. Within this timespan, chronology should not be lost sight of, and care should be taken when comparing evidence from the earliest fourteenth-century texts with the later material. While early ME material is excluded from the main body of texts, it is of considerable interest both for diachronic comparison and as additional evidence for partially surviving features in the LME material. The EME material connected with Herefordshire, including MS Jesus 29, will be considered separately in chapter 5, and the evidence will be used in conjunction with the LME material in chapter 6.

The texts included in the main body of material may now be listed. Their order follows that of the *LALME* code numbers, which will be used to refer to them throughout the study (for the slight modifications of usage employed here, see p 32). Fuller information about each text is given in the individual studies in chapter 4.

Late Middle English texts localized in Herefordshire (main body of material)

- 7260 London, BL Royal 17 B xliii. *Mandeville's Travels*.
- 7280 London, BL Harley 2281. *Prick of Conscience*.
- 7290 London, BL Add 4698. *Agnus Castus*, medica etc.
- 7301/2 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 293. Two hands. *Piers Plowman* C-text.
- 7310 Oxford, Bodleian Laud Misc 553, hand A. *Agnus Castus*.
- 7320 London, BL Harley 2376. *Piers Plowman* C-text.
- 7330 Oxford, Bodleian Digby 171. *Piers Plowman* C-text.
- 7340 Cambridge, University Library Dd.vi.29, hand of fols 110-124v. Two treatises on urines.
- 7351/2/3 Oxford, Bodleian Douce 78. *Titus and Vespasian*.
- 7361/2 London, BL Sloane 5. Two hands. Medica, astrological treatises etc.
- 7370 Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson B 171. *Prose Brut*.
- 7380 Princeton, University Library Garrett 138. *Prick of Conscience*.

- 7391/2 Oxford, Bodleian Tanner 201. Two hands. *Memoriale Credencium*.
- 7401/2 Hereford, County Record Office AL19/7. Register of Bishop John Trefnant; English text on fols 98v-106v.
- 7410 London, BL Additional 46919 (*olim* Phillipps 8336), main hand. Poems by William Herebert.
- 7420 Cambridge, University Library Kk.I.12. *Prose Brut*.
- 7430 London, BL Cotton Cleopatra D ix, hand B. Part of *Southern English Legendary: Gregorius*.
- 7450 Cambridge, St John's College 34 (B.12). Gower, *Confessio Amantis*.
- 7460 Cambridge, Selwyn College 108 L.1. Part of New Testament.
- 7481/2 Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson B 173. Two hands. *Prose Brut*.
- 7500 London, BL Harley 201, hand A. *Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle*.
- 7510 Oxford, St John's College 6. Lydgate, *Troy Book*.
- 7520 Longleat, Marquess of Bath's MSS, 5. Service handbook on fols 1-35.
- 9260 London, BL Harley 2253. Miscellany, mainly of poetry.

The criterion that the texts should, ideally, represent similar genres or styles, cannot be met in any strict sense without dividing up the material into typologically meaningless units. It will, however, be important to note any special considerations that pertain to particular types of text, and to avoid such types of material that may be expected to be unreliable. Such considerations will be discussed, as appropriate, in connection with the individual texts. It may, however, be noted that some types of text tend to yield very varied and abundant material, while others contain a more restricted range, both as regards lexical items and grammatical categories. A limitation of range is especially notable in the case of the herbals and medical texts (7290, 7310, 7340 and 7361) and texts of the prose chronicle *Brut* (7370, 7420 and 7481); for example, the latter contain large numbers of preterites, especially of a few verbs like ‘came’ and ‘died’, and few present tense verb forms. On the other hand, some texts, like those of *Piers Plowman* (7300, 7320 and 7330), yield a very varied range of material even over short stretches. Accordingly, to aim at statistical validity by specifying a uniform length of samples, or a given number of attestations to be required of a given item, would make little sense; each text must be taken on its own merits.

The relative length of the texts may not be as important as the range and amount of material they yield; however, very short texts cannot yield very much, however wide their range. Less than ten attestations of the main form for an item might perhaps be considered too few to base judgments upon; on the other hand, if five texts each yield two or three occurrences of a dialectal form, say, *fur* for ‘fire’, this might be considered valid evidence for the use of the form in the area. Again, each case must to some extent be judged on its own merits.

The following texts are too short to yield over ten forms for more than a handful of items: 7310, 7340, 7361, 7410 and 7430. This might be considered a reason for excluding them altogether; however, as these texts are particularly interesting linguistically, and their usage is regular as regards those few forms that occur in great numbers, they are included in the main body of material.

2.2 The collection of data

For the present study, the texts listed above have been analysed using a questionnaire especially composed for the purpose. As they had each already been analysed for *LALME*, the justification of a second analysis might be called into question; before proceeding any further, it may be of relevance to consider the matter briefly.

Firstly, the presentation in *LALME* of the material for Herefordshire, as for the Southern half of England as a whole, involves certain problems, most conveniently set out and explained by Michael Benskin (1991b). This material was gathered at an early stage of the project, by a different collector from that of the northern parts; it was also finished much earlier, and organized in a different format. In the conversion to the format in which the material was eventually published, some of the forms appear to have become misrepresented. An example of this can be seen by comparing the *LALME* Item map for 'was' with the findings of the present study (Appendix 3, Item map 124). The *LALME* map lacks attested forms for a large number of texts, and suggests that <wes> is the dominant form in Herefordshire; the present study, on the other hand, shows attested forms for all but one of the texts; of these, 21 texts have <was> as the sole form, while three show dominant <wes>; a further four have sporadic <wes> alongside <was>. As Benskin (1991b: 216-17) explains, the discrepancy is due to a misrepresentation of the diagnostically valuable forms gathered by Samuels, as though they were a record of all occurring forms:

Samuels had initially collected only the *wes* and *wos* types, and otherwise unusual forms; but *was* gradually infiltrated the record, and that it had not been collected in the early stages was forgotten. Hence the *Atlas* record of southern 'was' is properly a record of non-*was*.

According to Benskin (1991b: 219), Samuels 'sought features of diagnostic value, not so much items as particular forms, having realised early on that the standard repertoire was no sufficient basis for recovering the patterns of the past'. In other words, the work of Samuels aims at a 'grasp of the whole' rather than an exhaustive description of occurring

forms, and his method of data collection reflects typological rather than descriptive aims to a much higher degree than that used in the Northern part.

When presented within the framework of *LALME*, along with notes that, as Benskin points out, properly belong to the Northern part only, the material for the South comes out misleading in places. However, what errors arose in the preparation of the published *Atlas* have no effect on the reliability of Samuels' localizations, which were based on his original analyses. Similarly, as the omissions tend to be of 'forms that Samuels regarded as devoid of diagnostic value' (i.e. 'unmarked' forms like <was> as against <wes>, <wos>), they should not affect the value of the existing maps for the purpose of localization (Benskin 1991b: 218-19).

It reflects the speed and intensity of Samuels' work that the sections analysed for *LALME* are often comparatively short, and sometimes consist only of a single short passage from the beginning of a text; printed editions, sometimes inaccurate ones, were also extensively used. As the present study concentrates on a comparatively small group of texts, and aims to study them in some detail, it is essential to cover all the texts in their entirety, or at least in large, representative sections. It is particularly important that the sections are selected from more than one part of the text, as the beginning often contains forms that differ from the rest, and changes of usage may occur at any point (see p 38). Similarly, to study as many texts as possible either in manuscript or good-quality reproduction is desirable both for the sake of accuracy and for any additional information that can thus be gained; the help of a scholarly edition is, of course, of great value when available.

A second analysis will, then, provide a control for the *LALME* material, and, in many cases, provide a more detailed and comprehensive coverage of the material. The most important point is, however, that both the aims and scope of this study are different from those of *LALME*. While the main objective of the *LALME* work was to construct a typological framework for continued study, the present study aims to make use of that framework for descriptive and interpretative purposes. The southern *LALME* material was not, in itself, meant to form the basis of a descriptive study, and the evidence, as well as the questions asked of it, will need to be supplemented and modified in order to yield the information required for the study of a particular dialect.

The questionnaire

The practical methods of gathering and organizing the material have largely been those employed in the *LALME* project, that is, to construct scribal profiles and item lists based on data collected from the texts by means of a questionnaire. This has been considered more suitable for the scope of the present study than the alternative method of computer tagging, used by the *LAEME* team. The analysis of long texts using a questionnaire, although time-consuming, is still less labour-intensive than the transcribing, typing out and tagging of such texts; the latter method could not have been used to cover the quantity of text here analysed during a limited period of time. Also, an exhaustive coverage of all the linguistic data is in no way called for. A study of this scope must necessarily be selective, and the combined force of Samuels' work and traditional Middle English dialectology provides excellent guidelines for selection.

The selection of items to be included in the questionnaire must, first of all, take into account the type of data required. McIntosh (1974 [1989]: 46) distinguishes between Graphetic Profiles (GP) and Linguistic Profiles (LP). A study of GPs will not be attempted here, nor will graphetic information be systematically collected; however, such information will from time to time be drawn in when relevant to the discussion of a particular manuscript. Within LPs, a further distinction is made between features that seem to imply a contrast in the spoken mode (S-features), e.g. *etes: etep*, *hem: þem*, *vche: eche*; and ones that seem to carry no phonic implication (W-features), e.g. *sche: she*, *itt: yt*. The two categories appear to some extent to operate on different levels of scribal transmission; according to McIntosh (1974 [1989]: 47), a scribe sometimes 'fails to impose his own S-features on texts but does impose upon them various *scribal* characteristics of his own'. Accordingly, the questionnaire should contain a number of both S- and W- features, and the distinction between them should not be lost sight of.³

The distinction between different levels of language is also of importance within the category of S-features. The use of the texts as evidence is based on the assumption that scribes tend to translate into their own dialectal usage; however, translation on one level of language need not imply translation on other levels (see Benskin and Laing 1981: 93-98; see also pp 109-110 below). It appears that, while features of orthography and

morphology are commonly translated by scribes, syntactic features, especially ones that involve large structures, tend to be left untouched. As regards lexical items, scribal behaviour seems to be greatly variable and difficult to determine. The present questionnaire, like that of *LALME*, might, then, most profitably concentrate on features of spelling and morphology.

In the *LALME* questionnaire, the items consist mainly of single words, selected to elicit information about patterns of variation; to a more limited extent, bound morphemes are also included, as well as a small number of phonological categories. Items of the latter kind were avoided chiefly because ‘each word has its own history’; the principle is equally relevant here. In the actual choice of items, the main criteria are identified by Benskin and Laing (1981: 60) as ‘(1) [an item’s] likelihood of occurrence in any ample text, and (2) the existence of two or more functional equivalents for such an item in M.E. overall’. The importance of the first criterion, apart from the obvious need to collect a large quantity of material, lies in comparability; ideally, all the profiles that are to be compared should include the same set of entries, although in practice large overlapping subsets will have to suffice. Benskin and Laing (1981: 61) suggest that a questionnaire of at least around a hundred items is advisable for ‘general use’. The questionnaire should contain a sufficiently large number of items to elicit material for the study of areas of phonology, orthography and morphology; on the other hand, it should be of a manageable size so that the analysis can be completed within reasonable time. For the present purpose, the simplest procedure seemed to be to take the *LALME* questionnaire as a starting point, and modify it to suit the needs of the present study, taking account of the different purpose and scope (see pp 19, 29). A large core of shared items were, however, retained in order to allow comparison with the *LALME* material.

In the Herefordshire context, most items in the *LALME* questionnaire can be expected to comply with the criterion of frequency of occurrence. However, some items, especially in the northern version, could not be expected to yield data of interest, while others appeared to be of little relevance for the study of the Herefordshire dialect; such items were excluded. On the other hand, several items were added in order to elicit paradigmatic information pertaining to certain areas of grammar and phonology, in particular the pronoun and determiner systems and the stressed vowels. Other additions

involve various archaic or regional features that would have been of limited interest in the overall *LALME* survey. Altogether, the questionnaire used here contains 300 items, some of which are open-ended. The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 1, with notes on the conventions employed in the representation of the data.

Collection and organization of the data

The collection and organization of the data follows, in all essentials, the methodology set out by Benskin and Laing (1981: 59-62). The material is divided into scribal texts, each of which is treated separately. A scribal text consists of a single stretch of a text (a 'literary text', or a portion of one) that is copied by a single scribe. The material collected from one scribal text constitutes a linguistic profile (LP).

When two or more scribes contribute to the copying of a single literary text, each contribution constitutes a separate scribal text. When such scribes produce a similar language, the practice in *LALME* was to combine the contributions into a composite profile, as the primary concern was to provide a network of localized texts, to keep similar usages apart would have been unnecessary. For the present purpose, all scribal contributions are analysed separately, and conflated as evidence only if the dialect analysis suggests that they reflect a single underlying usage. In *LALME*, codes for composite LPs end in 1, e.g. LP 7361; the sub-profiles are referred to by substituting 2,3,4 etc, so that the two scribal contributions present in 7361 are referred to as 7362 and 7363. As composite profiles are not used here to the same extent, it is more natural to use codes ending in 1, 2, 3 etc for the different scribal profiles, e.g. 7361 and 7362. The combination of the two scribal texts will be referred to as 7361/2.

Collections of several literary texts in one manuscript, copied by a single scribe, are here usually treated as one scribal text; however, all literary texts contained in such manuscripts have been analysed separately to begin with, in order to detect any fluctuations of usage.

All the shorter texts have been analysed in their entirety. A full analysis has also been made of a few long texts (roughly, texts that consist of more than 60-70 fols); for

the most part, however, these have been dealt with in representative samples. The samples almost always cover more than a quarter, and typically more than half, of the entire text; however, as texts vary with regard to the quantity and range of material they yield (see p 27), as well as in the regularity of their usage, the samples also vary in proportion and size. Whether full or not, the analysis of each text has been carried out in sections by changing ink colour at intervals when completing the questionnaire. This produces a 'partially ordered profile' (Benskin and Laing 1981: 61), which allows for some view of changes during the text; where appropriate, a more detailed analysis has been carried out, involving a limited set of items.

Certain parts of the material are excluded from the analysis as potentially unreliable. All rubrics and headings have been ignored; these are sometimes added by another scribe, and cannot be expected to reflect the same usage as the text. For the same reason, all marginal notes and additions have been discounted. Verse texts involve some additional considerations: as Benskin and Laing (1981: 69-71) note, rhyming and alliterative usage may differ markedly from the remaining text, and may reflect the usage of the exemplar, even of the original, rather than that of the scribe himself. In the present study, rhyming words have been left out of the analysis altogether, with the exception of the group of poems by William Herebert (LP 7410), which is an authorial holograph. Alliteration as a dominant metrical device is found only in the *Piers Plowman* manuscripts, the alliterating words are in general included in the analysis, but their status is noted where appropriate

Most of the texts, nineteen manuscripts in all, have been analysed either directly from microfilm or from good-quality print-outs. The analysis of LP 7301/2 was made partly from microfilm, partly from the manuscript itself; LP 9260 was analysed from a facsimile edition, and three texts, LPs 7370, 7410 and 7430, from printed editions. The form of the questionnaire entries is strictly diplomatic, with the exception of capital letter forms, which are generally ignored. Abbreviations are expanded with underlining of the expanded part; the choice of spelling used in these is conventional and should not be taken to have any phonological significance. A full account of the conventions used in the questionnaire entries is given in Appendix 2.

2.3 Dialectal analysis: methods and concepts

In order to draw conclusions from the collected data, the material must first be contextualized and its status as evidence assessed. It was noted in the Introduction that every text has its own history; the interpretation of the data should, accordingly, be preceded by an examination of the texts themselves. This will take the form of a series of individual studies, in which each text is described and subjected to detailed dialectal analysis; these studies will take up most of chapter 4.

The techniques of dialectal analysis have been demonstrated by Margaret Laing (1988), using texts that contain very complex dialect mixtures. As the texts used in the present study have already been accepted as sources in *LALME*, they may be expected to contain only minor degrees of mixture between different regional usages. Even so, it will be important to consider matters like the changes and/or variation present in the text, the reliability and precision of the localizations, the degree of dialectal as opposed to 'colourless' or standardised usage, and the possible effects of scribal constraints. The latter concepts will need some clarification, and will be discussed below. They may most conveniently be treated under two main headings: 1) scribal behaviour, and 2) non-regional varieties of language, the latter including colourless and standardised language, as well as the survival of earlier spelling traditions.

Scribal behaviour: constrained selection

One of the most fundamental differences between the traditional approach to ME dialects and the *LALME* methodology is the shift of emphasis from the author to the scribe as informant. This is based on the realization that a text produced by a medieval scribe does not necessarily, or even typically, reflect a confused mixture of no regional significance, as used to be held (see pp 15, 39). It is now considered that a large part of the ME scribal output contains linguistic usage that can be described in regional terms, and explained in terms of a basic typology of scribal behaviour.⁴

The options open to a scribe copying from a dialect different from his own were originally set out by Angus McIntosh (1973: 61), as follows:

- A. He may leave the language more or less unchanged, like a modern scholar transcribing such a manuscript. This appears to happen only somewhat rarely.
- B. He may convert it into his own kind of language, making innumerable modifications to the orthography, the morphology, and the vocabulary. This happens commonly.
- C. He may do something somewhere between A and B. This also happens commonly.

As a basic rule, the copying practice described as type B can be expected to provide dialectally consistent material; type C will produce a mixed language unsuitable for use as evidence as such, while type A makes no dialectal contribution to the text. However, as Benskin and Laing (1981: 56) note, the distinctions are in reality less clear-cut:

The categories represent *types* rather than absolute distinctions, and the characterization is in detail clinal. Nevertheless, the practices of most M.E. scribes may usefully be described in these terms. The degree of inconsistency admitted by categories A and B is clearly much smaller than what may be contained in C: by definition, C is anything that is not sensibly described as either A or B

The *LALME* method of localization (see p 22) is based on the premise that a large number of ME texts can be treated as translations, i.e. type B-texts, and that such texts in general provide direct evidence for the local usage of clearly definable areas. An important qualification must, however, be made. It is quite likely that almost any ME text, even when it approximates very closely to type A or B, is literally a type C-text,

that is, it contains an element both of the scribe's own preferred usage and of the usage of his exemplar. The most important distinction is whether the mixture is of a random or an orderly kind. In the former case, it is a *Mischsprache*, which in general cannot be used as dialect evidence; in the latter, it is likely to contain usage that can be explained and defined in regional (or social) terms, and is therefore potentially useful as evidence.

The main concept relevant for such 'pseudo-*Mischsprachen*' is that of scribal constraints. The term 'constrained selection' is used by Benskin and Laing (1981: 72-75) to describe a particular copying strategy, whereby a scribe reproduces familiar forms as they stand, but substitutes his own preferred forms whenever he encounters an unfamiliar form, that is, one that lies outwith his own sphere of competence, or passive repertoire. The resulting text does not contain a single form that would be 'foreign' to the scribe, but it may look completely different from his own spontaneous usage. The same scribe may produce very different sets of forms when copying from different exemplars, a good example is the scribe of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of the *Canterbury tales*, whose usage has been analysed by M L Samuels (1983). Accordingly, constrained selection represents a modification of the scribe's spontaneous usage in the direction of his exemplar, but contains no exotic forms. Occasional relicts may of course occur here as elsewhere, the difference between an orderly selection containing relicts and a *Mischsprache* is clinal rather than absolute.

Constrained selection works within the parameters of the scribe's personal constraints and the dialectal differences involved. A scribe's tolerance of different forms - his passive repertoire - may be narrow or broad; similarly, the difference between his own dialect and that of his exemplar may range from negligible (almost all forms identical) to near-absolute (hardly a single shared form). A broadly tolerant scribe copying from a near-identical dialect would produce a *literatim* copy (type A) or something very close to it; on the other hand, a scribe with narrow tolerance copying from a very different dialect would produce essentially a translation (type B). With regard to the actual choice of forms, constrained selection thus simply shades into *literatim* copying and translation.

If we choose to view *literatim* copying and translation as two extreme cases of constrained selection, rather than separate, fundamentally different kinds of behaviour,

this will not seriously affect the application of the theory. Two points will, however, need discussion. Firstly, an imaginary 'pure' translator that would be entirely unaffected by his exemplar might be expected to produce only forms belonging to his active repertoire. On the other hand, a constrained scribe would reproduce a range of forms familiar to him, all of which would not necessarily belong to his own spontaneous usage; some might be rare in his regional variety. A text that contains constrained usage cannot therefore be taken as definitive evidence for the usage of a single location or scribe, but only as indicative of the forms *acceptable* to a scribe.

Secondly, even when the usage produced by a scribe contains only variants that are part of his own usage, their relative frequency may be conditioned by the exemplar. Thus, two stretches of text copied from different exemplars by the same scribe may contain exactly the same set of forms, but in very different proportions. This is unlikely to affect the localization of a text, but the possibility of such conditioning should be borne in mind when relating quantitative data to diatopic or diachronic developments.

The geographical placing of a text that contains constrained usage will thus necessarily involve a greater margin of doubt than the placing of one assumed to represent spontaneous usage only: the influence of the exemplar might, to some extent, skew the localization. However, this does not affect the general reliability of the fit-technique. Localization following this method always represents a focal area rather than a 'real' point on the geographical map, and the position is relative rather than absolute. Whether a usage is assumed to represent 'pure' translation or constrained usage, it also remains true that the localizations will be more reliable the denser the network becomes.

Specialized and transfer usage

Apart from constrained selection, Benskin and Laing (1981) describe two other types of selection that produce 'pseudo-*Mischsprachen*' of a typically more restricted scope. The special case of rhyming and alliterative usage has already been referred to (see p 33). Such instances, where a scribe differs from his usual practice because of special circumstances, might broadly be termed specialized usage,⁵ this might also include the

preservation of exotic (usually archaic) forms by a scribe when they occur in quoted legal formulas, catchphrases, proverbs and the like, as well as the representation of exotic dialectal usage in reported speech. Specialized usage should, of course, always be discounted from the scribal profile.

Even texts that otherwise contain very regular usage tend to show some irregularity at the beginning; the first few folios may show a gradual change from one internally consistent usage to another, or simply a higher incidence of variants. This seems to indicate a 'working-in' period at the beginning of the scribe's copying, before he settles into a routine. According to Benskin and Laing (1981: 67-68), the direction of the change is more likely to be from *literatim* copying towards translation ('progressive translation') than the other way around:

[the abandoned usage] is relict just insofar as it is abandoned by the scribe in course of copying this particular text: the distribution does not of itself establish to which scribe the relict language here belongs. In principle, it is quite possible for a scribe to begin by imposing his own language on the text, but as the text proceeds to abandon his own usage in favour of the increasingly familiar forms of his exemplar. In general, however, this kind of shift is probably much less common than the displacement of the language of an exemplar by the scribe's own forms

Subsequent studies have, however, shown that drift towards *literatim* copying does take place, according to Smith (1988b), this tendency is particularly common in the manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, where it appears to be linked with a felt 'authority' attaching to the text (see pp 191, 197).

Stretches of 'working-in' usage may recur within longer texts, suggesting that the scribe has gone through the process anew, perhaps after a long pause. Sudden occurrences of mixed or changing usage in a text may also signal a change of exemplar, or a change of usage in the exemplar, following which the scribe, whatever his usual practice, adjusts to the new forms. The usual cover term for these various types of working-in usage has been 'drift', a more specific term might be transfer usage

All ME texts of any length show some variation in their linguistic forms; the primary task when studying the usage of a text is to distinguish between the free or conditional variation that is to be expected within any local dialect or individual usage, and a mixture of forms that cannot be accommodated within the same regional dialect. The latter kind may, as shown above, represent either a ‘pseudo-*Mischsprache*’, some common types of which have been described, or a *Mischsprache* proper. It was noted above that the distinction between a *Mischsprache* and a consistent usage that contains relicts is clinal rather than absolute. This fuzziness gives rise to two further questions: the complexity of dialect mixtures and the methodological distinction between scribal variants and relicts.

It is no longer generally held that the majority of ME texts are ‘products of their own textual history’ (Tolkien 1929: 104). Firstly, the idea of ‘pure’ dialects has not withstood the evidence of modern sociolinguistics and dialect geography; in the absence of a fixed standard, orderly variation may be expected to be characteristic of the written mode as well as the spoken. Secondly, the idea that any given ME text is likely to represent an accumulation of a large number of scribal strata has not proved tenable. As Benskin and Laing (1981: 79-82) have shown, it can be demonstrated by statistical means that very complex dialect mixtures are unlikely to arise, and that their likelihood diminishes sharply with each layer of complexity.

Dialect mixtures are, of course, common in themselves, and part of the analysis of any mixed text will consist of attempting to define layers of different scribal contributions to the language. However, there are several reasons for attempting to postulate as few such layers as possible. Firstly, the odds are heavily stacked against very complex mixtures. Secondly, from a purely methodological point of view, it is sensible to choose the least complex options: as Benskin and Laing (1981: 83) point out, the more contributions we postulate to a text, the more likely we are to make mistakes. Thirdly, although it is possible to show that a particular form has been used in an area, the converse cannot be proved. Accordingly, as many forms as possible should be accommodated within an already defined scribal dialect.

The last point leads on to the second question. A form that on first sight seems incompatible with the rest of the scribe's usage may still be more sensibly accommodated within his passive repertoire than considered a relict. Even if the form is not attested in the immediate area suggested by the usage as a whole, it may have occurred as a minor variant, especially if it is attested in nearby areas. To exclude a form from the scribe's usage is thus justified only when there is good reason to consider it geographically incompatible. This leaves, of course, room for plenty of borderline cases, which can only be judged according to the context, or left open.

Non-regional varieties

Although regional patterns may be expected to account for much of the linguistic variation during the LME period, the possible influence of sociolinguistic factors must also be taken into account. In particular, in the latter part of the period, various developments related to the emergence of a written standard begin to appear; on the other hand, traces of earlier spelling conventions are retained especially in the early part of the period. These two influences may overlap in time, possibly even in the same scribal repertoire.

The so-called 'Chancery Standard', out of which standard written English is now considered to have evolved, does not appear until the 1430's, when Chancery documents for the first time begin to be issued in great numbers in the English language. Although the change from regional to standard usage was, eventually, absolute, it was not a sudden change as Norman Davis (1983) has shown, the replacement of forms was slow and gradual even in areas comparatively near London, and it would be fair to assume that the process was even slower in the west. However, other, related developments seem to have begun far earlier, and are highly relevant here.

The process of standardization was preceded from a relatively early date, perhaps the mid-fourteenth century, by the increasing use of 'colourless language', usage that is free from strongly regional forms, while not actively conforming to any definable standard. Such usage, described by Samuels (1963 [1989]: 75) as a 'purging.. of..

“grosser provincialisms””, is often impossible to localize with any precision. The difference between colourless and standardized language is that the former does not involve the adoption by a writer of a single exotic form; he simply selects widely used variants in preference to strongly dialectal ones.

The selection of colourless forms can be assumed to have sometimes been practically motivated: like translation, it may have been adopted as a conscious policy with the aim to be understood by an audience different from that of the original text. However, if it is assumed that the majority of ME scribes worked with some degree of constrained selection, an increasing tendency to colourless usage may be expected to evolve simply as a consequence of the scribal practice. A constrained scribe copying a text from a different dialect will tend to reproduce forms that are widely used and familiar, while replacing unfamiliar, strongly dialectal forms; although he may replace the latter with equally strongly dialectal forms of his own, the important point is that the widely used forms are much more likely to survive from one copy to the next. The more widely used a form is, the more likely it is to survive subsequent copyings; conversely, a strongly dialectal form is likely to be replaced by the next copyist using a different dialect. This does not, of course, mean that a long textual history necessarily must produce a colourless text, as it only takes one scribe with a narrow tolerance (or, translating tendency) to introduce strongly dialectal language at any stage of the transmission. The development also presupposes a degree of contact between different dialects. However, it seems likely that the overall evolutionary tendency would be towards less strongly dialectal usage.

During the latter part of the fourteenth century there are also signs that certain written varieties begin to show a potential for developing into standard usage. (A ‘standard’ is here loosely defined as a variety of language that is regularly used outside its original area, for a recent discussion relating to the topic, see Smith 1996: 68-71). Samuels (1963) has distinguished between four such ‘incipient standards’. Apart from the eventually successful ‘Chancery Standard’, the most important for the present purpose is a variety that occurs in the majority of all Wycliffite manuscripts, as well as in a wide range of other texts, during a period of at least fifty years from the latter half of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the fifteenth. This variety, termed Central

Midland Standard (henceforth CMS) by Samuels (1963 [1989]: 74), seems to represent an incipient standard based mainly on the usage of an area centred on Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, but used over a much wider area.

CMS seems to be the nearest approximation to a written standard before the mid-fifteenth century. However, although widespread, it did not become universally adopted. In comparison with Present-Day Standard English, moreover, it permitted a wide range of variation; few texts described as containing CMS conform to all characteristics ascribed to it (see Smith 1996: 70-71). This does not render the concept of CMS meaningless; however, rather than being seen as a fixed 'standard', it might more realistically be taken as a focal point towards which the individual texts tend, a model equally applicable to the early Chancery Standard. Smith (1996: 70) makes a useful distinction between standardized ('focused') and standard ('fixed') usage, pointing out that, in this context, terms like 'Central Midland *Standard*' and 'Chancery *Standard*' are misleading

While colourless usage and standardization must be taken into account when studying late ME texts, the period before 1350 involves other considerations, which will be discussed more fully in chapter 5 (see especially pp 253-55). In the early period, traditional spelling conventions still survive; this is particularly evident in the South-West Midlands, where a tradition of English writing seems to continue unbroken from pre-Conquest times well into the ME period (see p 254). Partly because of this conventional element, the use of early ME material for dialect study is fraught with problems. However, unlike the later standard language, the spelling traditions in the early ME period are strongly regionally based, and the most conventional spelling system during this period is unlikely to hide entirely a local connection.

A development towards less traditional spelling can be discerned throughout the early period, as Smith (1991) has shown, such tendencies are present already in the early thirteenth-century manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*. On the other hand, the *LALME* material suggests that certain traditional spellings survive in individual South-West Midland texts throughout the period (see e.g. p 354). Accordingly, the influence of earlier tradition cannot be dismissed as a possibility even at a late date.

In summary, the following types of non-regional usage may be present in a late Middle English text:

- Colourless usage; the purging of grosser provincialisms
- Standardized (not 'standard') usage, e g CMS
- Traces of earlier spelling conventions

The second type (and, to some extent, the third) may confuse the general rule that constrained selection involves no exotic forms; the adoption of the exotic forms of a standard into the repertoires of scribes takes place gradually rather than wholesale, and there is a cline between localizable regional dialect and standardized usage (see Samuels 1981 [1988] 87) Minor elements of all types may, moreover, be present in a single text, and may be impossible to distinguish from local variants; however, the distinction, when made, is important

3 THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT: A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY OF HEREFORDSHIRE

In the Introduction it was argued that, to be relevant, the study of a past variety of language should take into account the extralinguistic context of the evidence. As part of such contextualization, the present chapter will provide a survey of the geographical, historical and social background relevant to the Herefordshire material. The sociolinguistic situation in medieval Herefordshire will also be considered towards the end of the chapter. The account relies heavily on secondary sources, of which two are of particular importance. *The rural landscape of the Welsh borderland* by Dorothy Sylvester (1969) and *The West Midlands in the early Middle Ages* by Margaret Gelling (1992). A map of Herefordshire, intended for general reference, appears as the frontispiece.

The geographical background

Herefordshire consists of a central area of rolling lowland surrounded on most sides by hills. Geologically, it belongs to the Cambrian highland zone, but in terms of relief it forms part of the north-south lowland belt that stretches from Lancashire to Somerset. The highest areas are in the west, in the Black Mountains and the north-western uplands, which structurally belong to the Cambrian uplands. In the East and South, the Bromyard Plateau, the Woolhope Hills, parts of the Malverns and the Forest of Dean, as well as the uplands of Archenfield, form lower upland regions of varying character and soil (see Figure 1 and frontispiece).

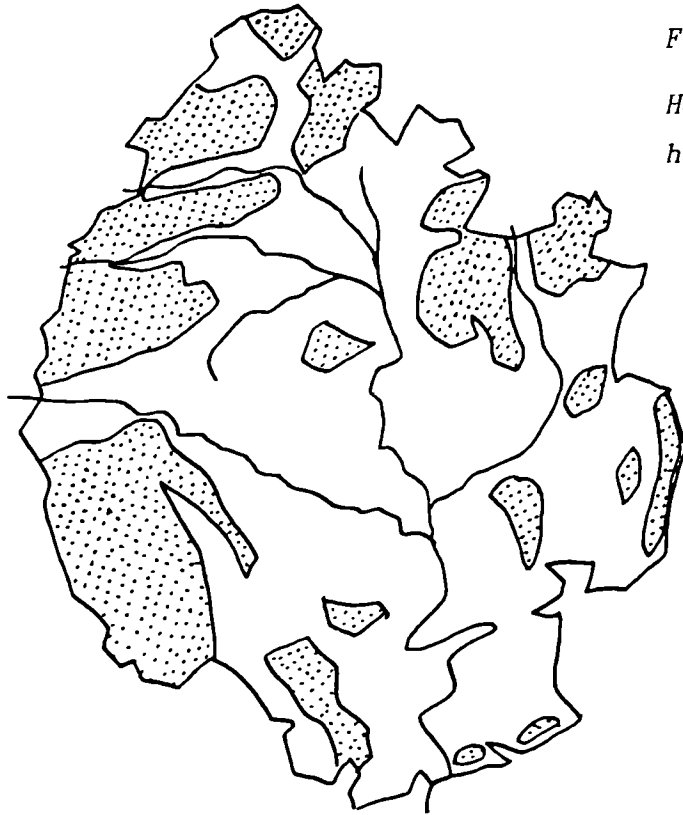


Figure 1

Herefordshire:
high ground (over 500 ft)



Figure 2

Herefordshire:
main routes

The lowest and most fertile areas centre around the rivers. The river Wye cuts through the county in a northwest-southeast direction; near Hereford, it meets the two other main rivers, the Lugg and the Frome, which flow through fertile lowlands stretching to the north and the east respectively, both with a network of tributaries. The northern and southern boundaries of Herefordshire, finally, partly follow the courses of the rivers Teme and Monnow.

For settlement in general, the distinction between highland and lowland is of some importance. As a rule, lowlands are more attractive for settlers, being more likely to provide for basic requirements like water, good land for agricultural and pastoral purposes, and easy communications. On the other hand, light lowland soils would, throughout the Middle Ages, have been unsuitable for agriculture, and lowlands may include unusable heaths and marshes. Highlands may also have positive attractions: they may provide bases for defence, or be sought after for religious reasons. Both latter factors were relevant for the Welsh, whose saints, with their followers, tended to settle in high places

In Herefordshire, the lowland basins around the rivers have at all periods been the most densely inhabited. The land quality in these areas is generally good, consisting of a heavy loam over Old Red Sandstone. Good land quality is also found in some of the upland regions and in the numerous valleys, notably the Golden Valley at the foot of the Black Mountains. The quality is poorer in the north-western and north-eastern uplands, as well as in the so-called Ryelands in the mid-south, where the soils are light and sandy. Water supply is not a problem in any part of the county (Sylvester 1969: 349).

Within Herefordshire, there are few serious obstacles for communication. There are no important areas of marsh or heath, and, according to Gelling (1992: 6), the woodland was relatively small-scale in post-Roman times, and would have constituted no hinder for communication. The mountains that surround the county on most sides would, on the other hand, have limited travel to a few routes, even if they would not have constituted absolute obstacles. The main routes through the area in the Middle Ages, still reflected in the present-day road system, follow the courses of the Lugg and the Wye, to the north, west and south respectively (see Figure 2):

Although [Herefordshire] lies across the major north-south route along the border, its approaches to the English Plain are relatively proscribed, and the route of second importance is not eastward but westward up the Wye valley into Wales (Sylvester 1969: 347).

These routes connect Hereford with Shrewsbury, Brecon and the important centres of Gloucestershire, Bristol and Gloucester; there are no major routes of communication eastward (see maps in Falkus and Gillingham 1981: 179; Glasscock 1973: 175).

Waves of settlement: Celtic and Anglo-Saxon

The settlement of Herefordshire dates back to very early times, as is shown by numerous Early Iron Age forts; however, only the post-Roman settlement is relevant here. This involves three major waves of settlement and influence: British Celtic, Anglo-Saxon and Norman. In settlement patterns, the Celtic influence appears to be the weightiest and the Norman the most superficial; however, all three have left a considerable contribution to the patterns still evident in Herefordshire (Sylvester 1969, *passim*; especially pp 192-206 and 360). Most of the area shows the dispersed settlement pattern traditionally seen as typical for Celtic peoples; however, the western part contains large clusters of nucleated villages, traditionally considered a Germanic feature. The background to this distribution is controversial, but it is likely to reflect the culturally mixed character of the area, which Sylvester (1969: 200) classifies, along with Cheshire, Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Western Gloucestershire, as a 'hybrid border zone' as regards settlement.

Archeological and place-name evidence suggests that the British Celtic settlement in Herefordshire was extensive, and concentrated on the lowlands around the river network. The Anglo-Saxons reached the area comparatively late, probably not before the seventh century, and even then in relatively modest numbers. According to Sylvester (1969: 356), the place-name evidence suggests that they first settled in the lowland areas already cleared by the Celts, 'probably in a peaceful interpenetration', and that their settlement was thinner here than in other counties, including Shropshire and Cheshire.

The Anglo-Saxons seem to have entered mainly from the southeast, from whence they spread into the lowland areas along the river network; another wave of settlement, into the northern parts and Shropshire, followed the river Teme in the northeast (see Figure 3).

During the seventh century, the West Midland area was transferred from Welsh to Mercian rule; exactly how this took place is uncertain, and the early sources of the respective nations are contradictory. According to Margaret Gelling (1992: 76), the transfer is unlikely to reflect a decisive anglicization of the area:

It cannot have been the result of a massive influx of English settlers, since the archaeological record shows that there was no reservoir of earlier-settled Angles in the counties immediately to the east. It must have been the result either of English conquest... or of voluntary secession... by the Welsh inhabitants. The latter is the more probable.

Early sources for the composition of the Mercian kingdom have been evaluated by Brooks (1989) and Gelling (1992: 80 ff), who agree in placing the core of the Mercian kingdom in the later county of Staffordshire, centring on Tamworth and Lichfield. Two subkingdoms referred to in early sources, those of the Hwicce and the Magonsæte, are believed to have been coterminous with the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford respectively, while a third tribal group, the Wreocensæte, is probably to be placed north of the latter, in northern Shropshire. According to Gelling (1992: 80), the territory of the Magonsæte 'comprised what later became the northern half of Herefordshire and the southern half of Shropshire, roughly (but not exactly) the land between the River Severn and the River Wye'.

Among the most important sources for the early history of the area are the texts connected with the early eighth-century abbess of Wenlock, St Mildburg, said to have been the daughter of Merewalh, variously referred to as *rex Westehanorum* and *Westan-Hecanorum rex* (Gelling 1992: 83). Following Finberg (1964: 71-72), this people has generally been identified with the Magonsæte, for which there are four references from

Figure 3

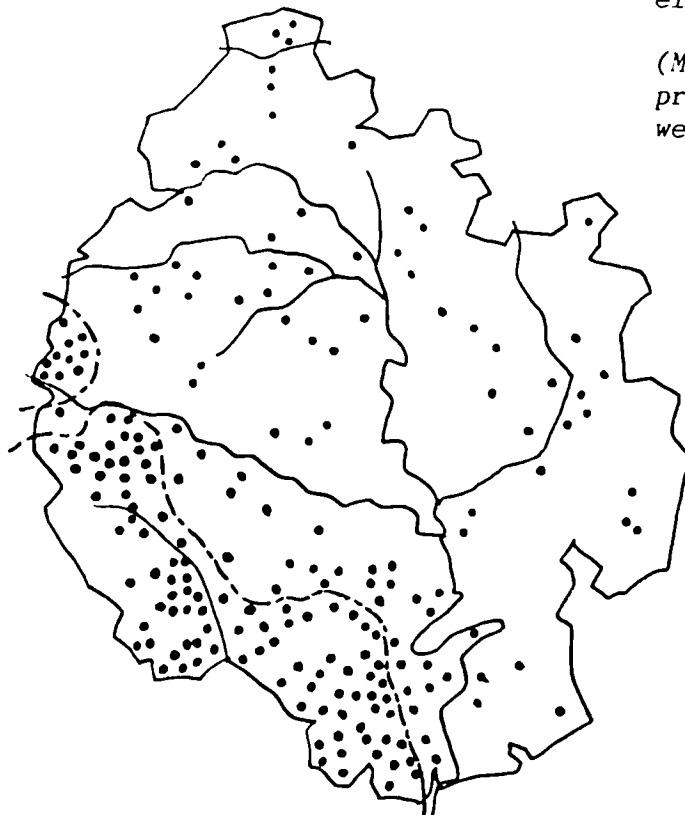
Early Old English place-
name elements and the
advance of settlement



Figure 4

Celtic place-name
elements

(Modern Welsh names
predominate south and
west of line)



the ninth to the eleventh century. The identification is, however, uncertain; the names have been discussed in detail by Sims-Williams (1990: 41 ff), who concludes that 'modern scholars who assert that the original name of the Magonsætan was *Hecani*, Western *Hecani* or the like, are... going further than present evidence allows (Sims-Williams 1990: 43)'. Pretty (1989: 182) has suggested that the area may have been inhabited by several tribal and political groupings in the early period, and that only the establishment of the diocese of Hereford around 680 may have united under a single controlling influence the area that later came to be known as that of the Magonsæte. She further argues that Merewalh, whose name translates as 'illustrious Welshman', may himself have been a Briton rather than an Anglo-Saxon (Pretty 1989: 176). Whatever the case, it is likely that the population of the area, even when they came to be ruled by indisputably Anglo-Saxon kings, would have contained a large proportion of Britons; according to Finberg (1964: 73, 77), 'the population over which King Merewalh ruled must have been predominantly Welsh in blood and speech', and 'it may well have taken centuries for English to become the predominant speech'. The bilingual character of the population may be reflected in the name of an eighth-century bishop of Hereford, Walhstod, or 'interpreter' (Sims-Williams 1990: 40).

The late eighth-century earthwork known as Offa's Dyke is usually considered to demarcate the political boundary between Anglo-Saxon and Welsh rule.⁶ Portions of the dyke appear only in the northwest of Herefordshire; in the rest of the county, where it is absent, it has been held that the river Wye constituted the boundary (see e.g. Stenton 1970: 196). As regards settlement, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have made little inroad south of the Wye. North of the river, Celtic place-names occur almost exclusively in pre-Welsh, British Celtic form; however, in Herefordshire south of the Wye, Welsh place-name elements predominate (see Figure 4). According to Sylvester (1969: 353), in the region of Archenfield 'they are scarcely interrupted by English names, and there is believed never to have been an effective [pre-Conquest] English settlement'.

The area later known as Archenfield, consisting of the lands between the Wye, the Monnow and Worm Brook, originally formed the main part of the small Welsh kingdom of Ergyng. It seems to have come under English rule in the eighth or ninth century, and, according to Gelling (1992: 117), functioned as a buffer state between the

two nations. Archenfield retained Welsh laws and customs well beyond the Norman Conquest; these were partly still in use in the thirteenth century (Rees 1924: 208), and inheritance by gavelkind is said to have survived until the eighteenth century (Sylvester 1969: 352). The area west of the Dore, Ewyas, remained fully Welsh until beyond the Norman Conquest, and was only very gradually anglicized; it belonged to a Welsh diocese until 1852.

The Scandinavian wars

The Danish invasions from the ninth century onwards had little direct effect on the Herefordshire area; before the reign of Cnut, Scandinavian presence took the form of occasional raids and battles rather than settlement. However, the political reorganization of the area was an indirect consequence of the wars. In the late ninth century, the western part of Mercia came under West-Saxon overlordship, and the shire system replaced the earlier Mercian administrative units in the tenth or eleventh century. The new system reflected the militarization of the country during the Danish wars.

Administrative areas were centred around defensible settlements; according to Gelling (1992: 139), the role of Hereford as a garrison town goes back to the early stages of the wars. The shire divisions in Western Mercia ignored the older tribal and ecclesiastical units, it has been suggested that their formation was to some extent intentionally arbitrary, in order to 'emphasize the demise of the older arrangements' (Gelling 1992: 141). Thus, the earlier land of the Magonsæte was divided between Shropshire and Herefordshire, the latter of which also came to include the Welsh region of Archenfield.

Scandinavian presence was never a major factor in Herefordshire; however, the reign of Cnut (1016-35) saw a transfer of many estates into Danish hands throughout England, including the West Midlands. The Domesday Book lists about twenty Danish names of landholders in the Herefordshire area, with lands at 43 named places (Dobson 1976: 369-377)

The Normans

Norman presence in Herefordshire predates the Conquest: during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66), land was increasingly granted to Normans, and their presence is well evidenced in the county. Richard's Castle, one the first Norman castles in England, was built around 1050 on the Shropshire border; it may also be noted that a Norman, Ralf, ruled Herefordshire 1054-57, and that another, Walter, held the bishop's see before and during the Conquest (Stenton 1971: 569, 660). According to Sylvester (1969: 111, 357) Herefordshire was particularly attractive to the Normans. Its frontier situation meant possibilities for expansion and conquest, while the fertile lowland parts held the straightforward attraction of good land; these two aspects of the presence of the Normans underlie the later division into militarized west and manorialized east, which is retained throughout the later medieval period.

Under William the Conqueror, palatinate earldoms were created in the three borderland counties. Those of Herefordshire and Shropshire were short-lived and, by the early twelfth century, the larger parts of the two counties were returned to the direct rule of the crown. The western areas came to be divided into largely autonomous marcher lordships, which, in Herefordshire, centred on the three early Norman castles of Wigmore, Clifford and Ewyas Harold. The northern areas, around Wigmore and Richard's Castle, came to be under the control of the Mortimer family, while the Lacys gradually gained dominance in the marcher area further south.

In the early period, the marcher lordships expanded their area into Welsh territory, and formed a broad border area that became strongly militarized and filled with castles. As a buffer zone between the two nations, this area developed a pattern of hybrid settlement, with communities divided into Englishries and Welshries. The Englishries tended to centre on a castle and develop into market towns, while the Welshries retained dispersed settlement patterns; the traditional Welsh systems of common tribal ownership and inheritance based on gavelkind also survived in these areas at least until the fourteenth century (Sylvester 1969: 116-18; Rees 1924: 215).

The central and eastern plains attracted a Norman presence of a different kind. Sylvester (1969: 357) suggests that 'the mild climate and general air of fertility made this

one of the Normans' most favoured counties', and that 'manorialisation... was stronger here than in any other part of the borderland'. The division between the western and eastern parts of the county followed to a certain extent the older division into Welsh and Anglo-Saxon settlement, although the Normans pushed their settlement further south and west, into Ewyas and the borders of Radnor forest. In both cases, however, the lowland plains remained in the centre of economic and agricultural development.

A further effect of the Norman presence in Herefordshire, as elsewhere, was the large-scale establishment of churches and religious houses. In the later Middle Ages, religious foundations were scattered fairly evenly over the county, and included most major orders. Knowles and Hadcock (1953, *passim*) list some twenty religious houses in medieval Herefordshire; most of these seem, however, to have been very small. The most important were the Benedictine priories in Hereford and Leominster; the abbey of Augustinian canons in Wigmore and their priory in Wormsley; the Cistercian Abbey Dore in the Golden Valley; the Cluniac priory in Clifford; and the large Dominican and Franciscan houses in Hereford. The majority of the remaining houses were tiny, mostly Benedictine, cells. There were also secular colleges throughout the period in Hereford, Bromyard and Ledbury.

Population and economy

Herefordshire has never been a densely populated area, although its population in the Middle Ages may have compared more equally with other parts of the country than it does today. The recorded rural population of Herefordshire in the Domesday Book is 4,450 (Atkin 1971: 72). To estimate the actual population, multiplying with four or five is traditional, the 1086 population might thus be estimated to 17,800 - 22,250, although the method is extremely unreliable. The maps provided by Darby (1971: 429-435) suggest that the density of population and the general prosperity of Herefordshire, except for its western extremes, compared fairly equally with the counties to the east and south, while Shropshire and Staffordshire were considerably poorer and more thinly populated.

The population density appears to have varied greatly within the county.

According to calculations from the Domesday Book material, the density in the central and eastern areas would have been of the order of *ca* eight people per square mile, with the Wigmore and Bromyard areas intermediate with 6.1 and 5 respectively, and the western and southern regions showing very low estimates, from 0.9 to 3 (Atkin 1971: 80-81). The Domesday figures are, however, likely to underestimate the population in areas where Anglo-Norman control was weak; no figures for Ewyas can be estimated, and those for Archenfield rest on vague references to 'the king's men'. Still, there is no doubt that the eastern and central parts were then, as now, the most densely populated. That these parts, and especially the eastern area around the lower Frome, Ledbury and Woolhope, also were relatively wealthy is suggested by the calculation of plough-teams in the Domesday Book (Atkin 1971: 79-80; Darby 1971: 432).

The Domesday evidence shows a great contrast between the prosperity of the eastern part of the county and the devastation of much of the western part. The 'waste' holdings along the western border numbered up to 63 in 1066 and 50 in 1086, and were probably mainly caused by Welsh raids (Darby 1971: 449). Although the evidence is scanty, border raiding and warfare is likely to have thwarted the economy of this area for most of the medieval period. The militarized marcher zone survived until the Union in 1536; however, conditions became in general more peaceful after the treaty of Rhuddlan in 1284, with the exception of renewed devastation during the Owen Glendower rebellion in 1400-1403.

At the time of the Domesday survey there were three or four boroughs in Herefordshire, including Hereford itself. During the later Middle Ages, the number increased to sixteen (Beresford and Finberg 1973: 38, 122-24); apart from the boroughs, most of the large villages in the west acquired market privileges during this period. The majority of the new boroughs were created during the second half of the thirteenth century, reflecting a general economic growth during this period. Hereford and Leominster came to be of some importance as trading centres on a wider scale. The most important trading communications would follow the southern transport route to Bristol, in the fourteenth century England's wealthiest town after London (Donkin 1973: 134; Glasscock 1973: 184), and the site of the nearest fair and seaport.

From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, wool was the predominant article of trade in England; during this period, the borderland area, which produced wool of high quality, was of some economic importance. The foreign trade in raw wool culminated in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, after which the export of ready cloth began to surpass it in importance, and the focus of trade shifted to the Chilterns and the Southwest; however, wool production in Herefordshire continued throughout and beyond the Middle Ages.

The fourteenth century saw a general setback in the rise of prosperity and population. The famines of 1315-17 and 1321, as well as the pestilences of 1349 and later, affected England as a whole, while the Glendower rebellion caused a serious economic setback in the borderland region in particular. As elsewhere, these afflictions accelerated social and economic changes that were already under way, including the break-up of the manor system.

The relative prosperity of Herefordshire culminated in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century. A map of the distribution of wealth in 1225 (Falkus and Gillingham 1981: 176) shows Herefordshire as an area of average wealth, and Hereford as a major urban centre, later maps suggest that, as the population and prosperity of England again began to increase from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, the increase in Herefordshire was slower than average, and continued to be so (see maps in Darby 1973: 191, 252, 306-08)

The linguistic situation in medieval Herefordshire

The preceding historical survey suggests that the linguistic environment of medieval Herefordshire may have been remarkably complex. Immediately after the Norman Conquest, at least three languages, Welsh, English and Norman French, must have been spoken in the area; however, little is known about their relative strengths and interrelationships, or about the patterns of their development in the subsequent period.

Because of the strong Norman presence, the position of French in the early post-Conquest period may have been comparatively weighty; however, it is unlikely to have

differed essentially in kind from that in most parts of the country, and may be assumed to have been largely confined to the upper levels of society (see Berndt 1965; Clark 1992). A more interesting question concerns the relationship between Welsh and English. It was noted above that the Anglo-Saxon settlers seem to have been relatively few in number; unlike most parts of England, where replacement of Celtic by English may be assumed to have been relatively rapid, a very slow and gradual process of language shift appears to have taken place in the Herefordshire area.

It is impossible to tell how long Celtic, or Welsh, speech persisted in any given area; however, the place-name evidence suggests that the rates of disappearance vary greatly. Areas that are particularly connected with early Anglo-Saxon history seem to show an early disappearance of Celtic speech (see Sylvester 1969: 354); on the other hand, place-names south and west of the Wye show that these areas remained Welsh-speaking throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. According to Gelling (1992: 70), the evidence as a whole suggests that 'large areas of the country must have been wholly or partly Welsh-speaking up to and beyond the Norman Conquest... In the greater part of Herefordshire, Welsh speech cannot have been exceptional'.

The decisive replacement of Welsh may, then, be assumed to belong to the post-Conquest period. While Welsh can, in the eleventh century, have been the dominant language only in the southern and western districts, a Welsh element may never have entirely disappeared from the county; in particular, Welsh speech seems to have been continuously present in the city of Hereford, reinforced by later migration (Sylvester 1969: 352). The culturally mixed marcher areas may be assumed to have retained a considerable degree of bilingualism for a long time. The survival of such bilingualism, and the effect of language contact on the medieval English dialect, will be considered further in chapter 7, in the light of the material analysed in part II.

PART II

4 THE LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH MATERIAL

4.1 Plan of the analysis

To assess the evidential status and value of the source materials defined in part I, each text must be studied individually, and a detailed analysis carried out of its dialectal characteristics and structure. The analysis should clarify to what extent the text is likely to represent a single dialectal contribution localizable in a particular area, and determine any special considerations that affect its use as evidence. The main theoretical and methodological concepts upon which the analyses are based were outlined in Chapter 2 above. In the present chapter, all the texts defined as the main body of evidence, i.e. the mapped *LALME* material dating from *ca* 1300-1500, are analysed in turn.

For each text, the following basic information is given in a heading line: the code number as used in the present study; the full manuscript reference (town, repository, name and number); numbers of the folios containing the text studied; the approximate date of the text, based on the most recent available opinion or on a consensus of opinions (if controversial or uncertain, it is discussed separately); and, finally, the *LALME* code.

The discussion of each text falls into two parts, description and analysis. The description includes: information about the scribal hand or hands; notes on manuscript characteristics and history where relevant; description of the text(s) contained in the manuscript and, where relevant and available, information about the textual background. Any additional information important to the dialectal study of the text will also be noted. The aim is to provide a basic store of contextual information as a supplement to the linguistic data, not to supply full accounts of codicological, paleographical or textual detail. References to important editions and studies are given. In view of the range of texts included, these are necessarily selective; however, references to *LALME* and the *Catalogue of Sources for LAEME* (Laing 1993), as well as to the literature connected

with the Atlas projects⁷, are intended to be as complete as possible.

While the dialectal analysis of each text will to some extent reflect its special characteristics, the general structure may be summarized. The *LALME* localization is given, with additional notes where relevant. The overall consistency of the linguistic usage is assessed; major changes are noted, and the text is divided into as many stretches of internally consistent usage as necessary. For each internally consistent text, a group of dialectally distinctive forms is defined as a basis for localization. This group should include only regularly occurring forms, for which *LALME* provides sufficient material for judgments about distributions.

A localization, based on the material published in *LALME*, will be carried out for each text. The procedure follows that outlined by Benskin (1991: 16-25), and is demonstrated with maps drawn from the *LALME* material. As regards these maps, two important points must be made from the outset. Firstly, as with the maps in Appendix 4, the Herefordshire material has been slightly modified in light of the present data.⁸ Secondly, it should be noted that the map entry for the text being localized is not itself used as evidence for localization; in each case, it is entered on the map, but marked with a blue circle in order to set it apart from the texts in relation to which it is localized.

It should also be noted that the localizations are not simply a repetition of the process earlier carried out for *LALME* by Samuels. As noted in Chapter 2, the initial analysis of the texts covers, in some cases, considerably larger stretches than the *LALME* analysis did, the material is thus not identical, and new localizations will provide a useful comparison. The more detailed study, made possible by the geographically limited material, also results in some further divisions of scribal texts, which require separate treatment. Moreover, as Benskin (1991: 26) notes, the availability of *LALME* as a finished product has entirely changed the localization process: the earlier localizations were part of the work in progress, and did not have access to the completed maps or to an overview of the entire material. This is especially relevant to Samuels' work, which was completed at an early stage. Finally, the techniques used in localization, including a definition of the distinctive dialectal elements in a text, and the mapping out of their distributions, form an integral part of the dialectal analysis of any ME text, and are methodologically indispensable.

When the localization has been carried out, the remaining material is assessed, and any forms that disagree with the localization are noted. In the case of substantial numbers of ‘recalcitrant’ forms, further analysis is needed to define the different dialectal elements present in the text (see Benskin and Laing 1981: 82-84). Likewise, changes within the text, clusters of relicts and other interesting features will be noted and their significance assessed. The analysis will conclude with an evaluation of the text as evidence for the dialect of Herefordshire.

Direct comparison between different usages is called for in the case of most texts. This may involve changes within a single text, parts of a literary text copied out by different scribes, or, occasionally, strong similarities between the usages of different scribes in different manuscripts. The comparison is generally made by listing forms in tables. For the sake of conciseness, the data is not usually exhaustive, but chosen for interest and demonstrative force; the full material may be consulted in the relevant Linguistic Profiles (Appendix 2). Similarly, for the sake of clarity, the maps are drawn using as few forms as possible, with the aim to select only those forms needed to delimit the most precise possible localization. Accordingly, the maps provide an illustration of the localization rather than the complete evidence. The latter is represented by the full lists of diagnostic forms, the dialectal distributions of which may be found in the accompanying maps (Appendix 4) or in *LALME*. The localization maps are designed as ‘dot maps’, combining the data for, typically, three or four items on a single map; the most likely localization suggested by the distribution patterns is indicated with red lines.

The order of the individual studies of the texts follows roughly the sequence of the LP numbers, however, as some texts have literary or dialectal connections that make it desirable to treat them as a group, the order is not strictly followed, and the texts are analysed in the sequence given below.

7260, 7280, 7380; 7290, 7361/2, 7310, 7340; 7300, 7320, 7330; 7351/2/3; 7370, 7420, 7481/2; 7391/2; 7401/2; 7410; 7430; 7450; 7460; 7500; 7510, 7520; 9260

4.2 Dialectal analysis of the texts

4.2.1 *Mandeville's Travels*: LP 7260

7260 London, British Library Royal 17 B xliii, fols 4 - 115; s xv in (*LALME* 7260)

The manuscript consists of 112 folios and contains a slightly imperfect version of *Mandeville's Travels*. The text is copied by a single scribe in a neat secretary hand (for a description see Seymour 1965-6: 185). The text ends imperfectly; according to Seymour, one leaf of text is missing after fol 115.

The manuscript was in the eighteenth century bound, or rebound, together with three other fifteenth-century manuscripts. The compilation contains the following items, apart from blank or illustrated pages bound in between the texts:

MS 1) fols 4 - 115: *Mandeville's Travels*

MS 2) fols 116-130: *Sir Gowther*

MS 3) fols 132-148: *St Patrick's Purgatory*

MS 4) fols 150-183: *Vision of Tundal*; fol 184: *Mankend I cale*, in a sixteenth-century hand.

The known history of the manuscript is summarized by Seymour (1965-66: 186):

the compilation was owned by John Theyer (d. 1673) and bequeathed to his grandson Charles... It was then purchased by Charles II. The name 'Jo. Bridlington' (16th c.) occurs on f. 134. None of the four component manuscripts is recognizable in the catalogue of the library of Llanthony Abbey (B.M. MS Harley 460), the books of which the last prior, Richard Hart, is said to have given to his sister Ann, an ancestor of John Theyer.

Mandeville's Travels was one of the most popular medieval literary works; it survives in almost 300 manuscripts in all major European languages, including over forty in English. Of the first prose translation, made after 1375 and known as the Defective Version, 32 manuscripts survive, including the present one. The manuscripts have been described and classified by Seymour (1965-6).

According to Seymour (1965-6: 173) most of the manuscripts were copied in the first half of the fifteenth century. He notes a particular association of *Mandeville's Travels* with the North of England. Only about four of the thirty-two extant manuscripts of the Defective Version are written in a northern dialect, but there seems to be extensive evidence for lost northern texts: several manuscripts contain traces of northern forms, and Seymour (1965-6: 174) also cites bequests of the book by Northern owners as evidence for this connection. The majority of the extant manuscripts are, however, localizable in the South-east Midlands, with only a few surviving in Southern or Western dialects. No particularly close connection is noted between the present text and any other surviving one.

The text is analysed from a microfilm housed in Edinburgh University Library. The analysis is based on four sections of the text, including fols 10-24, 35-49, 60-74 and 85-99, which together make up *ca* 54 % of the entire text.

Analysis

The text was analysed in *LALME* as LP 7260, and was localized in southern Herefordshire near the Monmouth border, in an area that corresponds to the southern part of Archenfield on the geographical map; it is placed southernmost of all the Herefordshire texts in *LALME*. The following forms may be listed as most suitable for the purpose of localization:

eche 'each', *moche mochel* 'much', *eny* 'any', *lasse* 'less', *porewe* 'through', *pey* 'though', *or* 'ere', *noper* 'nor', *yet* 'yet', *ayen* 'again', *whanne* 'when', *goude* 'good', *bern-* 'burn', *dyede* 'died', *hyre* 'hear', *hurd-* 'heard', *vox-* 'fox', *aftur*

‘after’, *eddres* ‘adder’, *ferst(e)* ‘first’, *dud- ded-* ‘did’, *wordel(le)* ‘world’, *hure* ‘her’, *scholde* ‘should’, *han* ‘have’

Less common variants include *meny* ‘many’, *pulke* ‘the same’ and *fram* ‘from’. The forms *eche*, *eny*, *lasse*, *or*, *ayen*, *whanne* and *scholde*, as well as the spellings with *v-* for initial *f-*, suggest in general terms a localization in the southern part of the country, while *moche*, *aftur*, *ferst(e)* and *hure* suggest a non-central area. Of the remaining forms, *mochel*, *porewe*, *pey*, *noþer*, *goude*, *bern-*, *hyre*, *hurd-* and *wordel(le)*, as well as the minor forms *meny*, *pulke* and *fram*, all occur over a wide area across the southern counties, stretching up to S Herefordshire and Essex respectively in the west and east. The forms *dyede*, *eddres* and *han* are more northern, the last showing two distinct areas of distribution, a western one covering Herefordshire and N Worcestershire, and an eastern one in East Anglia, centred on Ely and Norfolk. These groups of forms co-occur in two areas only, S Herefordshire and S Essex. The former is rendered much more likely as a localization by two considerations: firstly, many of the forms listed above (e.g. *noþer*, *goud(e)*) occur only sporadically in Essex, while all occur as more or less definite clusters in the S Herefordshire area; secondly, spellings like *dud*, *aftur*, *hure*, while widespread, are typically western. The localization is shown in Figure 5, using the distributions of *porewe* *porowe*, *goud(e)* and *han*. In the west, these forms delimit the possible area to the southern extreme of Herefordshire, a localization with which all the other forms listed above agree.

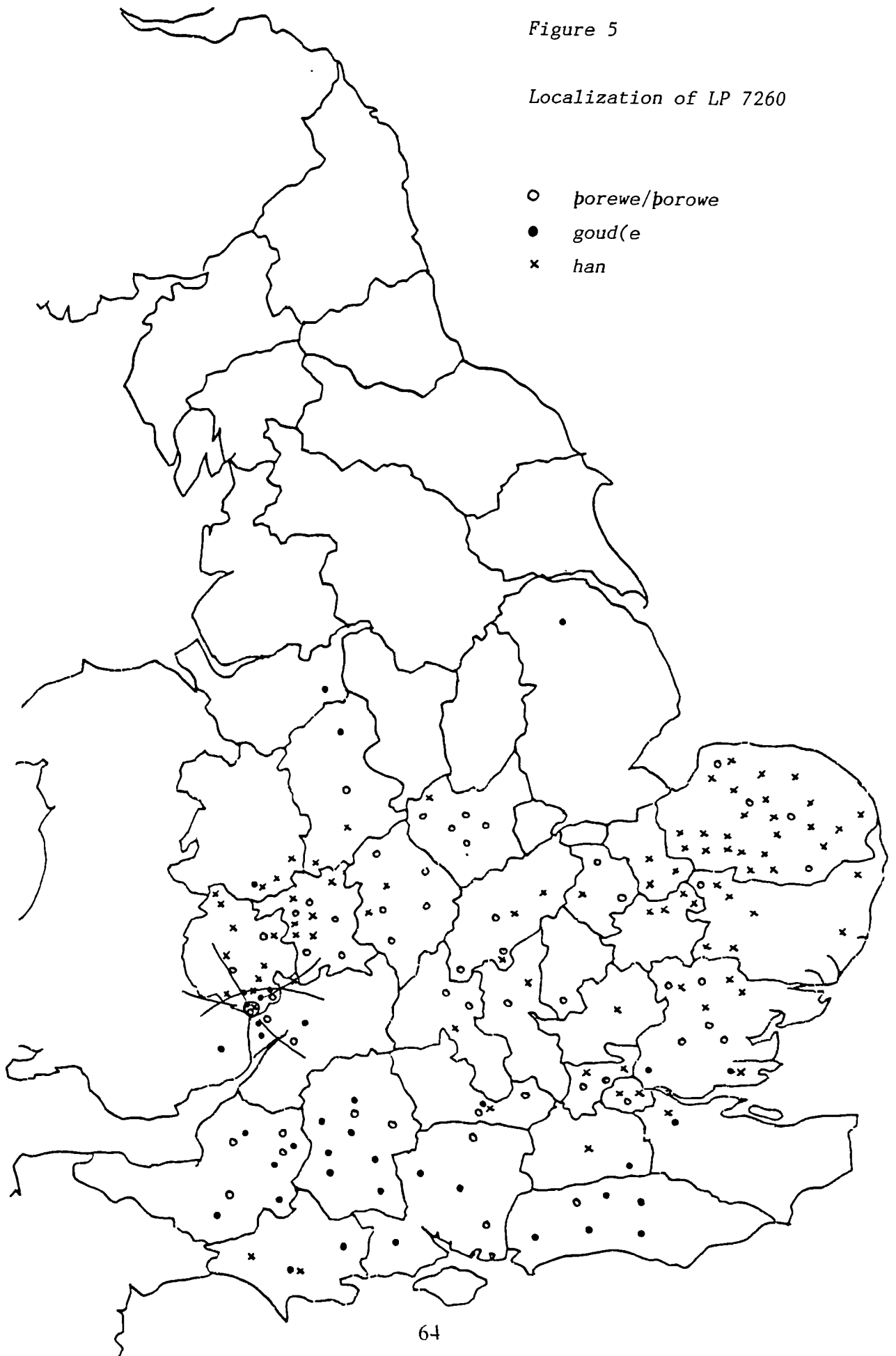
The linguistic usage is relatively consistent, with little variation and few changes within the text. A number of minor variants, all of which occur only sporadically, are clearly northern:

vnto ‘until’, *kyrke* ‘church’, *pr* part *-ande* (in placename), *walde* ‘would’, *askes* ‘ashes’, *egges* ‘eggs’, *haldeþ* ‘holds’, *stane* ‘stone’, *yl* ‘evil’

As noted above, Seymour suggests that the northern features that occur in many manuscripts of *Mandeville’s travels* go back to lost northern exemplars. However, the occurrence of sporadic northern forms is exceedingly common in fifteenth-century

Figure 5

Localization of LP 7260



southern manuscripts, and does not always necessarily reflect northern exemplars (see pp 238-39). Whatever the background in this case, the forms may be considered relicts, and should be excluded from use as evidence. Another group of sporadic minor variants seems to represent traditional Southwest Midland spellings:

makede 'made', *gon* '(be)gan', *nedde* 'had not', *hulles* 'hills', *seon* 'see', *hee* 'they', *hare hure* 'their', *tyly* 'till' (vb)

Of these, *makede*, *seon* and *tyly* would represent very conservative usage in the early fifteenth century; *gon*, *nedde* and *hee* would, on the other hand, seem to be marginal in the area where the text was localized, their distribution otherwise being limited to the areas to the north and west. The forms might be taken as minor variants in the scribe's repertoire; however, as they occur only sporadically, they should not be considered part of the scribal usage.

Certain purely orthographical changes occur towards the beginning, and presumably reflect the scribe's 'working-in' stage. The changes include an increasing tendency to use <ee> for the long vowel, so that *sche*, *we*, *pes*, *here* for 'she', 'we', 'this', 'their' are wholly or in part replaced by *schee*, *wee*, *pees*, *heere*. A similar change may occur with <o>, although the material for it is less abundant; however, there seems to be a change from *dope*, *gope* for 'does', 'goes' to *doop*, *goop*. Likewise, the scribe uses <th> as well as <p> towards the beginning, but gradually abandons the former.

Two noticeable changes involve S-features. Firstly, a marked decline in the use of the past participle prefix *y-* takes place within the text. Secondly, the usual southern forms *lond(e honde* for 'land', 'hand' occur in variation with forms spelled with <a>; in the case of *land*, the <a> forms gradually replace the former type, and are used almost exclusively towards the end of the text. Both changes would seem to suggest a movement away from conservative southern forms. The forms *land hand lang strang* are exclusively northern during much of the ME period, but spread southward during the fifteenth century and gradually oust the southern <o> spellings 'in EML progressively to the south, in London and the literary language' (Jordan 1974: 233). While spellings with <a> occur in several of the Herefordshire texts, they should probably not be considered

part of the local usage (see also pp 145, 313).

While the changes within the text appear to show a shift away from traditional SWML usage, it is difficult to tell whether the direction of change might be towards the scribe's own preferred usage or away from it; however, as the changes are very gradual and the earlier forms are never fully replaced, both sets may be assumed to belong to the scribe's repertoire. Apart from the northern-type relicts listed above, the material seems to contain no forms that would stand out as directly incompatible with the area, even if the *lande* type is doubtful. It is probable that the text, particularly on the levels of syntax and lexis, shows traces of earlier layers in other, northern or eastern, dialects; however, it seems to have undergone a relatively thorough translation, and may be assumed to provide fairly reliable evidence for the linguistic horizons of a South Herefordshire scribe.

4.2.2 The *Prick of Conscience*: LPs 7280 and 7380.

The Herefordshire material contains two manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience*, London, BL Harley 2281 (*LALME* 7280) and Princeton, Garrett 138 (*LALME* 7380). Both are dated to the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and follow, for the most part, the so-called Southern Recension of the poem.

The *Prick of Conscience* survives in 115 manuscripts. It seems to have been composed in the North of England, probably Yorkshire, around the middle of the fourteenth century (Lewis and McIntosh 1982: 4). Of the surviving manuscripts, 97 contain the original or Main Version, itself divisible into subcategories, while eighteen contain a revised version known as the Southern Recension. The latter seems to have originated in the South, possibly in the Thames valley (Lewis and McIntosh 1982: 9). Unlike the Main Version, manuscripts of which appear in virtually all parts of the country, the Southern Recension manuscripts are concentrated in a limited area, centred on the Southwest Midlands, with stray texts localized in London, Sussex and East Anglia (see map in Lewis and McIntosh 1982: 173).

A textual study of Book V of the Southern Recension has been carried out by Waters (1976), who classified the texts into an A- and B-group. Both Herefordshire texts represent in the main the Southern Recension; the Garrett text (LP 7380) is conflated, and follows the Main Version to begin with (see p 72). In Book V, both texts belong to the B-group of the Southern Recension.

The Main Version has been edited by Morris (1863); the Southern Version has not been edited. All manuscripts of the poem have been described and catalogued by Lewis and McIntosh (1982).

7280 London, British Library Harley 2281, fols 1-64v; s xv in (*LALME* 7280)

The manuscript consists of 64 folios, and contains an imperfect text of the Southern Recension of *Prick of Conscience*. The text is the work of a single scribe, and is written in anglicana formata with occasional secretary forms. Between the third and fourth quires, a gap indicates the omission of one eight-folio quire (Lewis and McIntosh 1982: 193). There is no title nor colophon, and the text ends imperfectly. On the basis of Book V, the text was assigned to group B by Waters; it stands in close textual relationship with MSS Bodleian Lyell empt 6 and Huntington San Marino HM 130 (see Lewis and McIntosh 1982: 139).

The analysis is based on a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library. The text is analysed in its entirety, except for virtually illegible passages at the beginning and end.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the text was localized as LP 7280 in the extreme southwest of Herefordshire, in what corresponds roughly to the area of south Ewyas on the geographical map. The usage is fairly consistent throughout; there are, however, some obvious relicts, and the regular usage contains some unusual forms. The following forms, all of which occur regularly throughout the text, may be used for localizing the text:

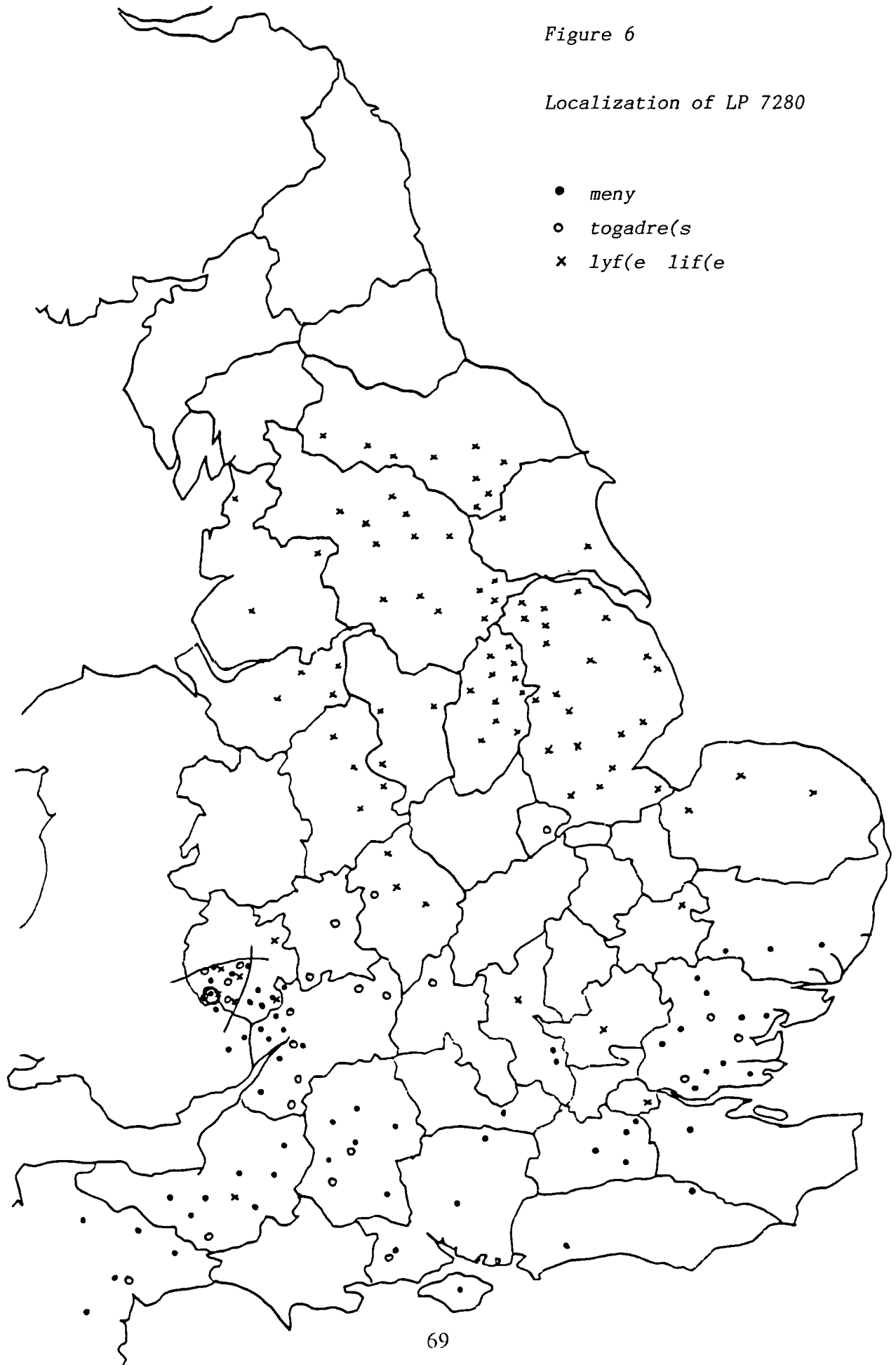
eche ‘each’, *muchel muchel* ‘much’, *meny menye* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *fram* ‘from’, *þoru3* ‘through’, *opere* ‘or’, *3et* ‘yet’, *togadre* ‘together’, *cherche* ‘church’, *deide deyde* ‘died’, *hur-* ‘hear’, *vif* ‘five’, *naddre* ‘adder’, *fuR* ‘fire’, *ferst* ‘first’, *put* ‘pit’, *werch-* ‘work’ (vb), *wordel- wordl-* ‘worldly’, *heo* ‘she’, *þai þay hy hi* ‘they’, *hire* ‘their’, *ham* ‘them’, *bep* ‘are’, *shullet* ‘shall’ (pl), *shuld-* ‘should’, *lyf* ‘live’

The spellings with <u> for OE *y*, <eo> in *heo*, and initial *v-* in words like *vif* define the dialect, to begin with, as most probably a SW or SWML one. A northern limit is provided by a large group of forms, including *muchel*, *meny*, *fram*, *togadre*, *cherche*, *deide deyde*, *hur-*, *ferst*, *wordel- wordl-*, *hy hi* and *ham*; the distribution of all these forms runs from S Herefordshire southwards, in most cases fanning out towards the east and occurring as far north as East Anglia on the eastern side. The forms *þoru3*, *3et* and *shuld-*, as well as *meny* and the general *schulleþ* type of ‘shall’ (pl) exclude most of Gloucestershire, leaving S Herefordshire with the western parts of Gloucestershire on the one hand, and a more southern area, including Somerset and Wiltshire, on the other. A more eastern localization seems unlikely in view of the numerous typically western forms. The forms so far listed occur with far greater regularity in the S Herefordshire area than further south; in particular, *þoru3*, *3et*, *togadre* and *shuld-* occur only sporadically in the southwestern area. Finally, in the SW and SWML areas, the form *lyf(e)* ‘live’ occurs regularly only in Herefordshire. As shown in Figure 6, the distribution of this form, together with *meny* and *togadre*, delimits the likely localization to the southwestern quarter of Herefordshire.

For most items, the scribe uses only one regular form. Orderly variation occurs in some fifteen items, and is consistent throughout the text; in most cases, a single form is clearly dominant, and all variants are such that commonly occur in the area, e.g. *meny* ~ *menye*, *nou3t* ~ *not*, *-ly* ~ *-liche*, *when* ~ *whenne*, *fur* ~ *fyr*. Only one item in the questionnaire shows changes of usage within the text: *hi/hy* type forms for ‘they’ predominate in the early part of the text, and again towards the end, while forms of the *þay* type are most common in the middle section. As no other forms seem to follow a similar pattern, it is likely that both were acceptable to the scribe, and that the selection is

Figure 6

Localization of LP 7280



conditioned either by the usage of the exemplar or by work patterns (e g a drift from *hi* forms to *pay* ones, followed by a pause in copying and the start of a new drift; see p 38).

The text contains a number of minor variants, most of which occur once only. Of these, *swiche* 'such', *3if* 'if', *þey* 'though' and *þo* 'then' agree with the SWML localization, while *many* 'many', *any* 'any', *lesse* 'less' and *ben* 'are' may be considered largely colourless; the forms *3oue* 'given', *þaire* 'their' and *es* 'is' are, however, alien to the area. It may be noted that *es* occurs as the regular form in part of the other Herefordshire text of the *Prick of Conscience*, as well as in a number of manuscripts of the Main Version that are localized in the southern part of the country; otherwise, the form is largely confined to the Northeast. These forms, all of which occur only sporadically, should be excluded from the evidence.

The text contains certain interesting orthographic features that are rare in the LME material, but which seem to correspond to certain earlier spelling conventions:

- 1) final -eþ is most commonly spelled <et>, both in verb forms, e g *shullet*, *willet*, *connet* (but always *beþ* 'are'), and in the noun *strenget* 'strength';
- 2) the segments that normally appear in ME as <aw> and <ou>/<ow> are regularly spelled <av>, <ov>; e g *sav* 'saw', *3ov* 'you', *hov* 'how';
- 3) <gh> often appears for g-: *ghymnyng* 'beginning', *ghistes* 'guests', *bighile* 'beguile'.

The *LALME* material shows only a few scattered occurrences of each type; however, all three occur in the thirteenth-century SWML material, and both 1) and 2) are common in the miscellany contained in MS Trinity 323 (see pp 258, 301). Type 1) is relatively frequent in the EME literary material, as well as in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century documentary materials, and has commonly been attributed to Anglo-Norman scribes (e g Jordan 1968: 182n); the same explanation has been given for the third type (Kristensson 1981: 374n). However, Clark (1992) has shown that such an explanation of thirteenth-century spellings is unrealistic; as regards the early fifteenth century, it is clearly out of the question. Whatever the ultimate background of the spellings, they appear to represent EME spelling conventions, and their late survival in the present text may be

assumed to reflect its marginal localization near or on the Welsh border.

Interestingly, the same spellings appear also in one of the two manuscripts that are textually closely related to the present one. This text, Huntington San Marino HM 130, is localized as LP 7271 in N Monmouthshire, across the county border from the present text. A comparison between the *LALME* profile of this text and the present material shows that the usage of the two texts is very similar indeed. The 7271 profile contains the forms *strenget* ‘strength’, *shullet* ‘shall’ (pl), *sav* ‘saw’ and *bighite* ‘beget’ ‘begotten’; the following distinctive forms are also shared by both texts:

meny ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *lasse* (*lesse*) ‘less’, *wipoute* ‘without’, *pou3* ‘though’, *er* (*or*) ‘ere’, *ne nobere nob~~er~~* ‘nor’, *nou3t* ‘not’, *3et* ‘yet’, *a3en* ‘again’, *ho* ‘who’, *owene* ‘own’, *ax-* ‘ask’, *cherche* ‘church’, *hure* ‘hear’, *aftir* ‘after’, *fulfelle* ‘fulfill’, *ferst* ‘first’, *besy* ‘busy’, *werche* ‘work vb’, *tueyn* ‘two’, *heo* ‘she’, *hire* ‘their’, *shal* ‘shall’, *shulde* ‘should’, *wile* ‘will’

The profiles differ mainly with regard to minor variants, and there are probably differences in relative frequency. It may also be noted that LP 7271 is the work of two scribes, not differentiated in the *LALME* profile. Still, as the language of the two texts, judging from the *LALME* material, is nearly identical, and they are textually close, they may be assumed to stand in a very close relationship; whether direct or not cannot be determined on the basis of the present material. The separate localizations are thus somewhat misleading, especially as they are listed under different counties in *LALME*.

A detailed comparison between the texts is not possible within the present study. It may, however, be noted that both contain minor variants that suggest an eastern element: so *3oue* ‘given’ and possibly *swyche* ‘such’ in LP 7280, and *feer* ‘fire’, *wele* ‘will’ in LP 7271. Taken together, these forms would point to Norfolk, an area that the sporadic forms *paire* ‘their’ and, possibly, *es* ‘is’ in LP 7280 also agree with. The forms are too scattered to be of much evidential value; however, considering that some of the Southern Recension texts are localized in East Anglia, a shared East Anglian element may at least be noted as a possibility. On the whole, however, it seems that LP 7280 contains a regionally fairly consistent usage. While a number of sporadic variants should

be excluded as evidence, all regularly occurring forms agree well with the localization, and should provide good evidence for the dialect of the SW Herefordshire - N Monmouthshire area.

7380 Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Library, Garrett 138 (formerly Yates, then Yates Thompson), fols 1-130; s xv in (*LALME* 7380)

The manuscript consists of 130 folios, and contains a text of the *Prick of Conscience* with an introductory table of contents. It is the work of a single scribe, written in anglicana formata. Lewis and McIntosh (1982: 145) suggest that the first quire, which contains the table of contents, may have been added after the main text was copied. Between fols 63r and 73v, parts of the text are copied in a wrong order, indicating a displacement of pages in the scribe's exemplar. The table of contents is preceded by the title 'Here bigynneþ þe boke whiche is iclepid þe prick of conscience þe whiche ys dyuised in vii parties'. The text of the poem is complete. According to Lewis and McIntosh (1982: 145), the text is conflated, following the Main Version of *Prick of Conscience* up to ca line 715, after which it follows the Southern Recension. On the basis of Book V, the text was assigned to group B by Waters; it stands in close textual relationship to two other MSS in the group, Lichfield Cathedral 50 and Huntington San Marino HM 128.

The text is analysed from a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library. The analysis covers four sections, comprising fols 1-10, 20-39, 60-79 and 100-121; together, these make up *ca* 55 % of the entire text.

Analysis

The text was localized in *LALME* as the westernmost of a cluster centring on the Hereford area. The language is in the main consistent, but a few items undergo changes at more or less definable points. Two changes are fairly clear-cut: the first takes place

between fols 6 and 7 (after the table of contents), and the second around fol 115v.4. The changes involve partly the same items, and are summarized in Figure 7.

The changes appear to involve selections from a range of forms acceptable to the scribe: there is a large amount of overlap, and most forms fit into the SWML area. All or most forms may be assumed to form part of the scribe's repertoire, and it is likely that the differences reflect a constrained selection of different usages contained in his exemplar(s). As noted above (p 72), Lewis and McIntosh (1982: 145) suggest that the table of contents may have been added afterwards, and was probably copied from a different exemplar. Similarly, the main text of the poem may have been copied out from a composite exemplar, or from two separate ones, with a change of usage at the point corresponding to fol 115v.

A more gradual shift of usage takes place around fols 31-34, involving five items:

EACH	<i>eche</i> > <i>eche iche</i>	(<i>iche</i> appears from 34v on)
BUT	<i>bot</i> > <i>but</i>	(<i>but</i> “ “ 33r “)
BOTH	<i>bope</i> > <i>bop</i>	(<i>bop</i> “ “ “ “)
FIRST	<i>first</i> > <i>first first</i>	(<i>first</i> “ “ 32v “)
THEY	<i>pey</i> > <i>pei</i>	(<i>pei</i> “ “ 31r “)

No exact cut-off point can be defined for these changes, the gradual character of which suggests transfer, or working-in, usage of some kind. It is possible that there is a connection with the textual change noted by Lewis and McIntosh (1982: 145), according to whom a change from Main Version to Southern Recension takes place around line 715. As this would appear to correspond to fol 30v, it might be assumed that the scribe either transferred at this point from a Main Version exemplar to a Southern Recension one, or that his exemplar already contained a conflated text, which showed a change of usage where the transfer had taken place at an earlier stage.

The scribe thus seems to alter his usage after that of his exemplar(s) in three places: between fols six and seven, after fol 30v, and near the beginning of fol 115v. However, the major part of the scribe's usage remains the same throughout. Such forms

Item	Table of contents (fols 1-6)	Main text (fols 7-115v.4)	Main text (fols 115v.4-)
UNTIL	-	til 8 vn-til 1	ffort 2
NOT	not ((nou3t))	nou3t ((nought))	nou3t
FIRE	fuyR/- 6 fire 1	fire	fuyr 3
SHE	-	scheo 1 heo 1	hue 1
THEY	hy hi ((pai))	þai (þei) ((þey hy))	hy
THEIR	har (hare)	hare ((haR))	huR ((hure haR))
THEM	ham 1	hem ((hem))	hem
<i>prpl</i>	-ep 7	-ep ((-e -en))	-ep 8 -ip 1
IS	is (((ys es)))	es ((is))	is ((es ys))
ARE	bup ((buth bep))	bep (((be)))	bup bep ((buth))
SHALL <i>pl</i>	schul ((schulle schull schal))	schal (schul ((schulle))	schulleþ ((schul schulle))

Figure 7: Changes of linguistic usage between parts of LP 7380.

that occur regularly in all or most parts of the text may, then, be considered part of the scribe's repertoire, and used to localize his dialect. The following set of forms may be considered:

eche 'each', *muchē* 'much', *meny* 'many', *eny* 'any', *pulk* 'the same', *nouper* 'neither', *thurgh* 'through', *oper* 'or', *3ut* 'yet', *a3eyns a3eynes* 'against', *panne* 'then', *whoder* 'whither', *aftur* 'after', *naddre* 'adder', *dred* 'dreaded', *bury* 'bury', *mury* 'merry', *dud* 'did', *hy* 'they', *bup bep* 'are', *schuld-* 'should'

The forms *eche*, *muchē*, *eny*, *panne*, *aftur*, *bury*, *mury*, *dud* and *bup bep* suggest in general a southern or southwestern area, no further north than the extreme south of Shropshire. Of the other forms, *meny*, *pulk* and *hy* exclude the northern part of Herefordshire, as well as Worcestershire and the areas to the east, and the eastern part of Gloucestershire. Finally, *a3eyns*, *dred* and *schuld-* exclude the extreme south of Herefordshire and NW Gloucestershire, as well as the more southern areas. Together with *meny*, *pulk* and *hy*, these forms delimit the most likely localization to the central part of Herefordshire (see Figure 8). No regularly occurring forms shared by all parts of the text are incompatible with this localization.

The table of contents is too short for a worthwhile study of its linguistic features, although it may be noted that a number of strongly dialectal forms in this part, e.g. *fuyr*, *hy*, *bup* agree with the usage in the final section. The text is, however, likely to show working-in usage, and should be left out of consideration as dialect evidence.

The central part of the text (fols 7-115) contains a number of forms that cannot be fitted into a Herefordshire localization. Of these, the forms *een* 'eyes', *hegh* 'high' and *es* 'is' occur regularly throughout the text, while *iche* 'each' occurs as a variant from fol 34v on. The first three forms are in the main restricted to northern and NML areas, and occur only sporadically further south. The form *iche* occurs in many parts of the Midland and NML areas; however, in the *LALME* Herefordshire material it appears elsewhere only in LPs 7290 and 7400, both of which contain a mixed usage; the latter contains a demonstrable Northeast Midland element (see pp 167-68, 174). The distributions of *iche*, *hegh*, *een* and *es* may be mapped out to define the likely regional

Figure 8 Localization of LP 7380

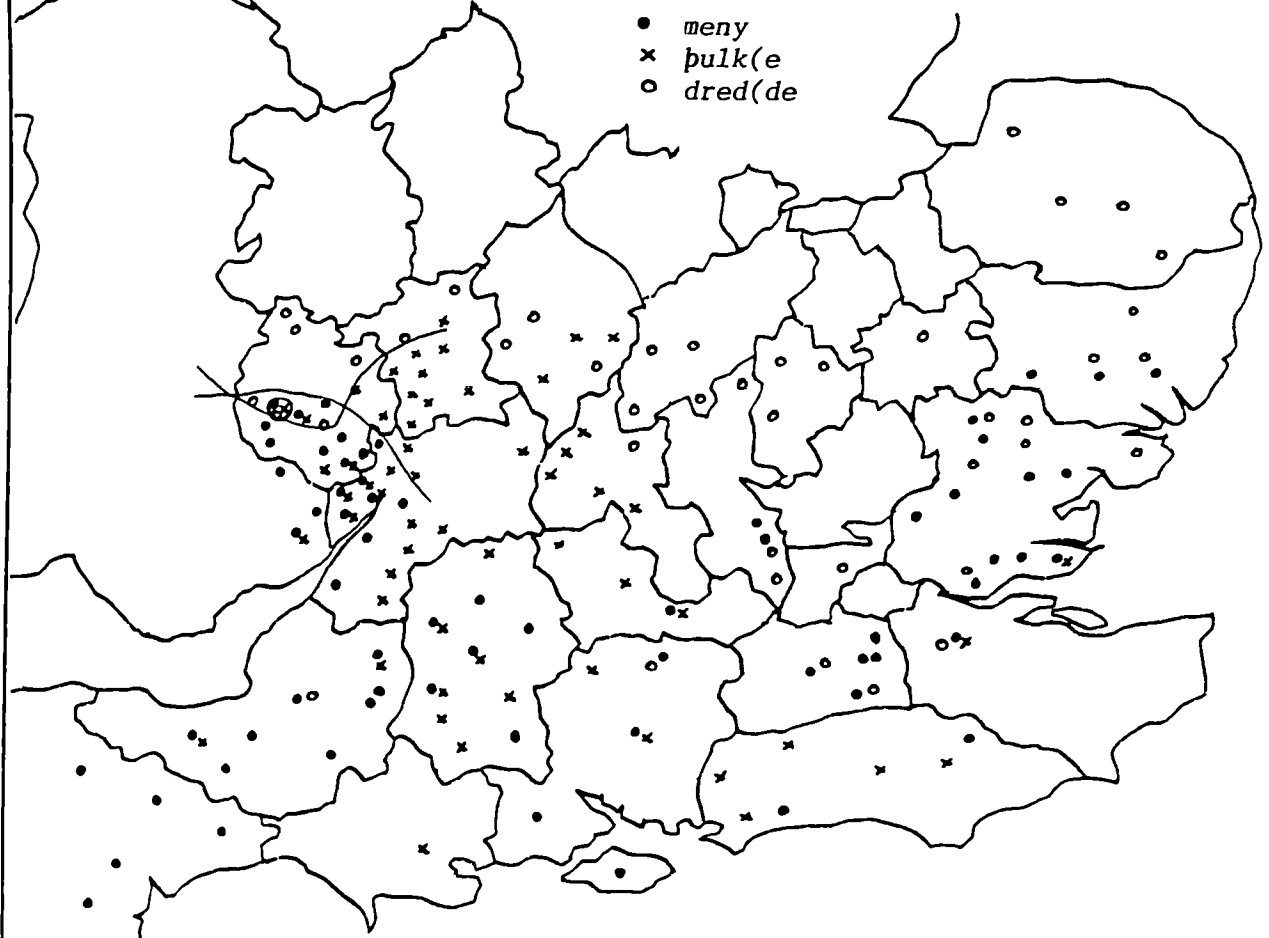


Figure 9 Forms in latter part of
LP 7380

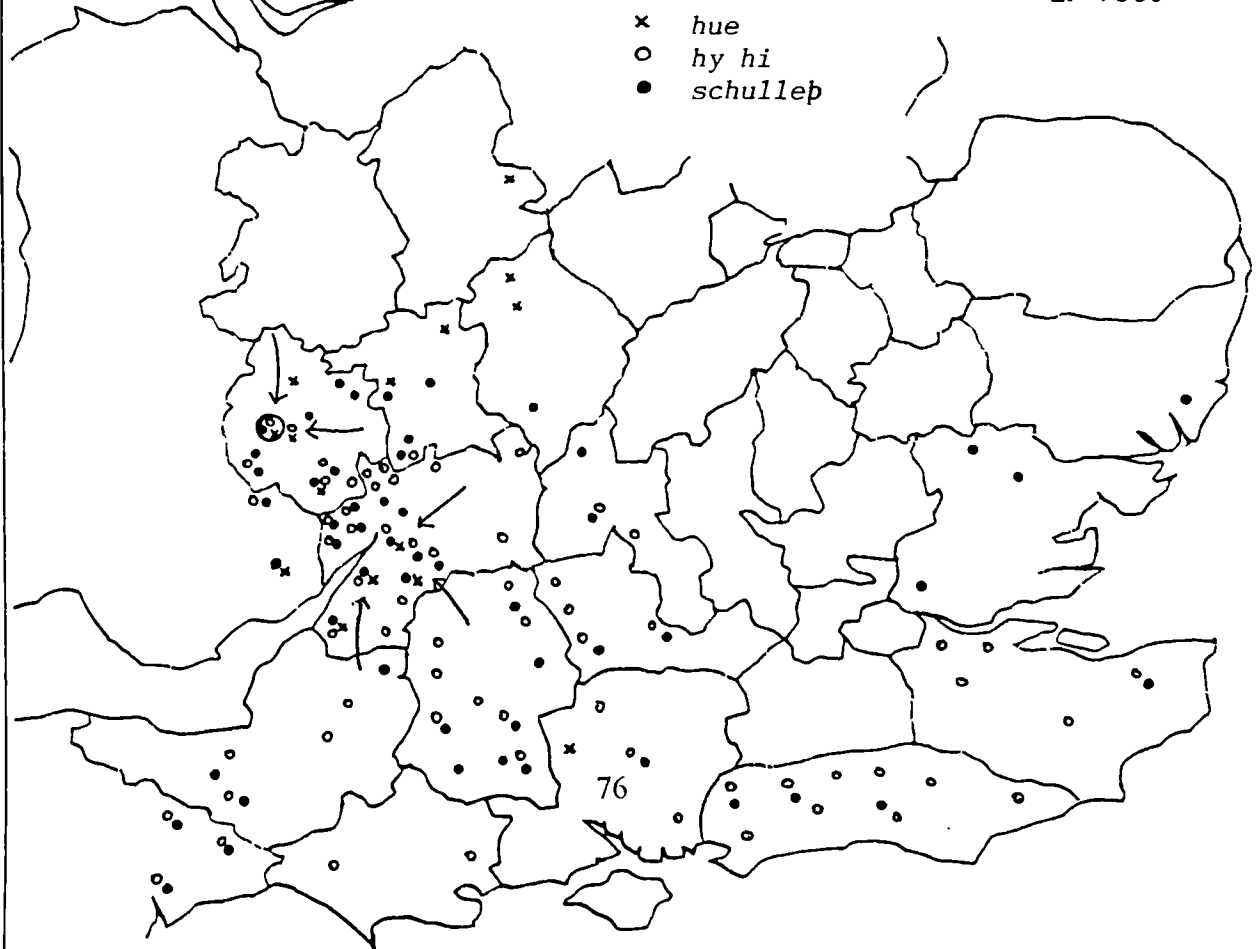


Figure 10

*NML forms in the central part
of LP 7380*



background of the non-Herefordshire element in the text. The form *hegh* occurs commonly throughout the northern and NML areas; the distributions of the other three forms, which are entered on Figure 10, overlap in the northern part of Nottinghamshire; the combination might also fit in the extreme south of Yorkshire or in S Lincolnshire.

The usage does not suggest a thoroughgoing *Mischsprache*: the number of variants is relatively low, and the forms seem to represent an orderly selection rather than a random mixture. The text is thus most likely to represent a constrained selection produced by a scribe whose dialect is localizable in Herefordshire, but who accepts certain forms that cannot be reconciled with this area. The opposite possibility, that the text represents a SWML usage copied by a northern scribe, is untenable, as the clearly SWML character of the shared usage between the three stretches of text must be assumed to reflect the dialect of the scribe.

That the central part of the text represents a copy from an exemplar in a more northern dialect is also suggested by other features. This part contains a less strongly regionally coloured SWML usage than the earlier and later parts, with forms like *pai* ‘they’, present plural in *-e -en*, *be* ‘are’ and *schal* ‘shall’ (pl) against *hy hi*, *-ep*, *bup*, *schullep*. Where the two parts differ, the forms in the central part are relatively colourless, suggesting that the text was copied from an exemplar in a different dialect (or one that itself contained colourless usage). The stretch also contains a number of northern relict forms, including *paire* ‘their’, and the present 3 sg ending *-es*.

The last part of the text, contained on fols 115v-130, shows a dialectal usage of much stronger SWML colouring. The following forms occur only in this part:

pei al-pei ‘though’, *ar* ‘ere’, *ffort* ‘until’, *ponke* ‘thank’, *hue* ‘she’, *hur(e)* ‘their’, *schullep* ‘shall’ (pl), *sigge* ‘say’, *libbep* ‘live’, *ligge* ‘lie’

This part of the text also shows a much higher incidence of the past participle prefix *y-* than the rest of the manuscript, with the prefix present in *ca* 73% of the possible instances, as against 34% in the table of contents and 11% in the central part. Similarly, the southern forms *hy* ‘they’ and *bup* ‘are’, which occur as variants in the central part, are used as main forms throughout the last stretch. These features seem to reflect a

more conservative SWML usage, which may be localized with some precision. The forms *pei*, *hue* and *schulleþ* limit the possible area to S Herefordshire, W Gloucestershire and a small part of Worcestershire; together with the distributions of *hy* ‘they’, they would place the usage either in central Herefordshire, roughly in the same area where the shared usage was localized, or in the SE Herefordshire - W Gloucestershire area (see Figure 9). All forms in the last part agree well with either localization. The overlap between the distributions in Figures 8 and 9, about the city of Hereford, may be assumed to reflect the dialectal constraints of the scribe.

It appears, then, that LP 7380 consists of three or four parts of unequal length and slightly differing linguistic usage. The differences seem to reflect changes of usage between or within the scribe’s exemplar(s), and indicate constrained selection. The central stretch would seem to have been copied from an exemplar in a more northern dialect, perhaps of Nottinghamshire, and contains a number of forms incompatible with Herefordshire usage. The last stretch of text contains a more consistent SWML usage, and was probably copied from an exemplar in a dialect similar to the scribe’s own.

A close similarity was noted by Samuels (1984 [1989]: 258) between the language of the present text and that of two other MSS, Bodleian Tanner 201 (LP 7391/2) and BL Sloane 1009, both of which have ‘early associations with Hereford’. A comparison between LPs 7380, 7391 and 7392 confirms this similarity, even though the usages are far from identical. It may be assumed that all these texts reflect a Hereford usage, whether or not there is a more specific connection (see pp 160, 247, 249).

The present text should, on the whole, provide fairly reliable evidence for the dialect of the Hereford area. Despite the changes between the different parts of the text, the majority of the forms remain consistent. Forms that occur only or mainly in the central part should be used as evidence only if confirmed by other sources. Those that occur in the final part only may tentatively be included in the evidence; however, as the stretch is fairly short, and the scribe’s repertoire otherwise includes some alien forms, they should be treated with caution.

4.2.3 Medical and scientific texts: LPs 7290, 7361, 7362, 7310 and 7340

The Herefordshire material contains five scribal texts, in four manuscripts, that may be described as medical or scientific in a broad sense; they include medical handbooks and recipe collections, treatises on urines, herbals, astrological treatises and the like. The linguistic usages of the scribes of LPs 7290, 7361 and 7362 are very similar, and the three texts are therefore considered together.

7290 London, British Library Additional 4698, fols 8-105; s xv (*LALME* 7290)

The manuscript is a collection of medical and related texts, mainly in English but with some Latin and French. It consists of 118 folios, of which the first seven are later additions. The text on fols 8-105 is copied by a single scribe, and contains the following items:

fols 8r - 15v	A treatise on urines titled <i>A iudicial</i>
15v - 16v	Recipes connected with the previous text
16v - 42r	<i>Liber herbarum (Agnus Castus)</i>
42v - 47r	<i>Tabula herbaria</i>
47r - 91v	Collection of medical recipes, some in Latin
91v - 105v	Another collection of medical recipes, 'j-drawe oute of gode bokis Galien and Asche Pyus and Ypocras'.

The text is written in a secretary hand with a forward slope, and is preceded and followed by shorter texts in various hands, dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There are numerous marginal scribbles. Many of the items in the present text also occur in other manuscripts; another text of the herbal *Agnus Castus* (MS Laud Misc 553) is used as the basis for LP 7310 in the present material (see p 91). The text is analysed from a microfilm at the Edinburgh University Library, and is covered in its entirety except for the partly illegible fols 30v - 46r.

The manuscript is a collection of medical and astrological texts, mostly in English but with some Latin. It consists of 186 folios, and is in the main the work of two scribes; the first twelve folios, as well as fols 57v-60v, contain writings by other hands and are excluded from the present study. The first scribe (A) is responsible for the text on fols 13r-57r, a translation of Æmilii Macer's *De virtutibus herbarum*; according to the colophon on fol 57r, the translation was made by Johannes Lelamour, schoolmaster of Hereford, in the year 1373.⁹ The herbal is followed by a Latin and English plant glossary on fols 57v-60v. The remainder of the manuscript is the work of the second scribe (B), and contains the following items:

fols 61r-63r	Medical treatise beginning 'age is moder' and ending, incomplete, 'in 'diuers placis and not'
63v-153r	Medical handbook covering topics from 'scotomye' to 'howe conception is lettid'
153r-155r	<i>Off the lepre and þ^e cure</i>
155r-155v	<i>Off horshed and þ^e cure</i>
158r-172v	<i>Greuance of women (Liber perucreseos galieni)</i>
173r-179r	<i>The meruieylous and sothefaste conynge of Astrologye</i>
179r	<i>The lettyng of þe mone</i>
179r-179v	<i>The mone of Ptolome</i>
179v-181r	<i>Super lunam</i>
181r-182v	A text beginning 'evermore after oþer regneþe þe 7 planetis'
182v-186v	A treatise on urines

Both A and B are secretary hands with some anglicana features; they are very similar in appearance. The analysis is based on a complete microfilm in Edinburgh University Library. The text copied by A has been analysed in its entirety. The much longer text by B has been analysed in samples, covering fols 61-79, 100-109, 145-155, 160-164 and 173-186, which together make up *ca* 47 % of the entire text.

Analysis of LPs 7290, 7361 and 7362

In *LALME*, the two scribal profiles derived from MS Sloane 5 (here LPs 7361 and 7362) were combined to form a composite profile (LP 7361 in *LALME*), as ‘two hands in similar language’. The language was localized in the southern part of Central Herefordshire, corresponding on the geographical map to the plains between Hereford and the upland regions of Archenfield. LP 7290 is placed somewhat further southeast.

As Figure 11 shows, the linguistic usages of the three scribal texts are very similar. A selection of the distinctive forms shared by all three texts is given below.

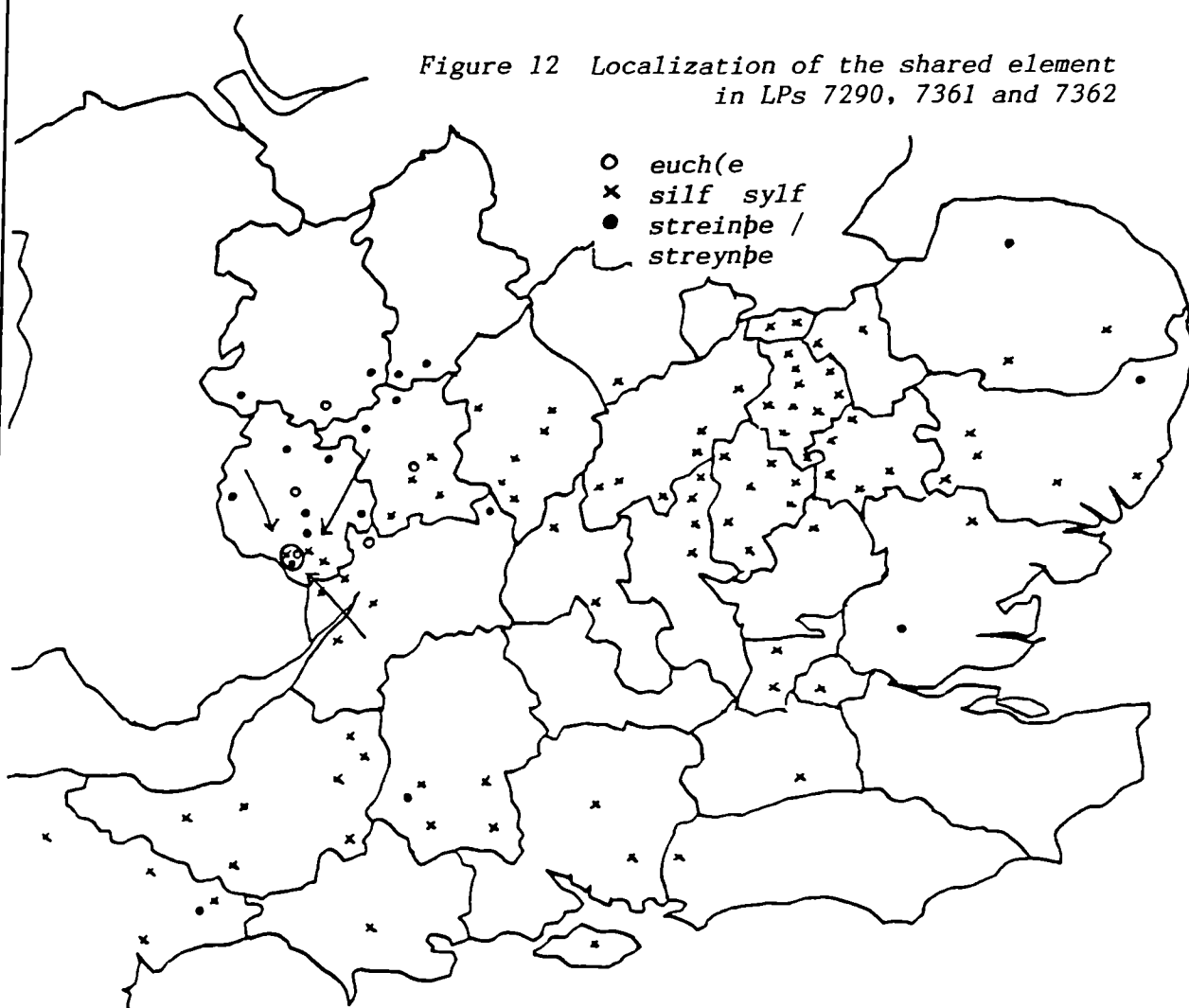
euche ‘each’, *suche* ‘such’, *whiche* ‘which’, *myche* ‘much’, *many* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *any* ‘any’, *fro* ‘from’, *prow(e* ‘through’, *but* ‘but’, *yf* ‘if’, *or* ‘or’, *oper* ‘or’, *ayene* ‘again’, *ayene* ‘against’, *silfe* ‘self’, *pan* ‘then’, *bird* ‘bird’, *bird(e* ‘third’, *morowe* ‘morrow’, *siluer* ‘silver’, *streynth(e* ‘strength’, *bran-* ‘burn’, *yf* ‘give’, *adder* ‘adder’, *whate* ‘what’, noun pl -is, -lich -liche ‘-ly’, *pu* ‘thou’, *she* ‘she’, *pei* ‘they’, present 3 sg -ip, *ben* ‘are’, *life* ‘live’ (vb)

The similarities include specific details of orthography, e.g. the spellings of *ayene* with medial <y> and of *she* with initial <sh>, neither of which agree with the most common usage in the area (see Appendix 3, Item lists 86, 88). The shared material also includes some rare forms like *euche*, *bran-* and *yf* ‘give’. The overall combination of forms seems too idiosyncratic to reflect simply a shared geographical background; it is more likely that the usage goes back to that of a single scribe, or reflects a close textual relationship of some kind.

The shared forms may thus be considered to reflect a single type of usage, of which a localization may be attempted. A large number of the shared forms are colourless: so *suche*, *whiche*, *many*, *any*, *fro*, *but*, *yf*, *or* ‘or’, *pei* ‘they’, *she* ‘she’. Others, like *eny*, *oper*, *ayene*, *pan* and *bep(e* suggest in general terms a southern localization. There are, however, a number of more strongly regional forms. In the southern part of the country, the *life* *lyfe* type occurs only in Herefordshire and, more

Item	LP 7290	LP 7361	LP 7362
EACH	eu che ((ilke))	eu che	eu che eu ich e
SUCH	sich e (such e)	such e	sich e (such e)
MUCH	my che ((moche mykell <i>etc</i>))	my che ((moche mekyll))	my che ((meche mekyll moche))
THROUGH	þoru3 (þrowe)	þrow(e	þrow(e <i>etc</i>
THOUGH	þei þow þou3	þey	þou3 <i>etc</i>
ERE	or ar	or er ar	er or
OR	or ((oþer))	oþer ((or))	or; eiþer ((oþer))
SELF	silfe ((selfe))	silfe-	silfe (selfe)
BIRD	bird	byrd birde	birdis byrdes
THIRD	þred(e þrid(e þird(e	þirde ((þerde third))	þirde þerd þirdde
GIVEN	youen yove	yeue yf	yevyn yeve 3eue 3oue
FIRE	fier e (fire)	fire fyre	fire (fier)
EVIL	evill (yvell)	evill	evill (jvell)
SHE	she	she	she
HER	hir ((her))	hir	hir ((her))
IT	it ((hit))	hit	hit ((jt))
THEY	þei ((þey))	þei (þey þay)	þei (þey þay)
THEM	hem ((þem))	ham ((hem))	hem ((þem ham))
<i>present pl</i>	-en -e (-eþ)	-iþ (-ith)	-yn -en (-iþ)
ARE	ben ((beþe be arne))	ben (beþ) ((er ar))	ben ((be beþe ar))
LIVE	lyue life	lyve lyfe	lyfe ((lyve))

Figure 11: Comparison between forms in LPs 7290, 7361 and 7362



sporadically, in N Warwickshire. The form *silf(e)* ‘self’ occurs most commonly in the Central Midland area, particularly Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire, but there are also clusters in the S Herefordshire - NW Gloucestershire area and in the southwest. Finally, the forms *euche* and *streynth(e)* occur only in Herefordshire and the immediately adjoining parts to the north and west. Together, these forms localize the usage in S Herefordshire, as shown in Figure 12.

Most of the remaining forms agree with this area. A few may, however, be considered marginal: so *ony*, *agayne* and *ar* ‘are’. The forms *bird* and *þird(e)* *þerd(e)* are of some interest. According to Jordan (1968: 149-50), these forms show a ‘reversed metathesis’ (*umgekehrte metathese*) which appears in the North during the late OE period and moves gradually southward during ME; in *LALME*, the *þird* type is collected only for the North, where it is restricted to the Northeast Midlands. In the Herefordshire material, the forms are unparalleled except for the single form *birdes* in another S Herefordshire profile, LP 7260. Considering the relative scarcity of the data for these items, the typically SWML spellings of the type *þeryd* ‘third’ (see *LALME* IV: 319) and the frequency of metathesis in the modern dialect of the area (see p 314), the forms may probably be treated as local variants.

While the shared element is prominent in all three texts, each contains forms not found in the others; in particular, 7290 and 7362 share a number of forms that cannot be reconciled with the shared SWML usage. In order to assess these differences, the usages of each text will be briefly discussed in turn.

LP 7290

LP 7290 contains the following regularly used forms that are not shared by the other two scribal texts: *þoru3* ‘through’, *3it* ‘yet’, *þred(e)* *þrid(e)* ‘third’, *ded-* ‘did’, *wll* ‘will’.

Unlike the two other texts, LP 7290 also shows a clear preference for using <e>, rather than <i>, for the unstressed vowel of inflexional endings. No precise localization can be based on these forms; however, it may be noted that *ded-* excludes northern and central areas, while *þoru3* excludes the east and is particularly common in S Herefordshire and

W Gloucestershire, an area into which the spelling *wll* would also fit very well. Where LP 7290 agrees with LP 7361, the forms suggest the same area: so *pei pey* ‘though’, *ar* ‘ere’. Shared forms with LP 7362 constitute a larger and more varied group; most of these are fairly colourless, but a few, like *siche* ‘such’, *3oue youen* ‘given’ suggest an element of Central Midland Standard (CMS) usage (see p 89 below; for the concept of CMS see pp 41-42).

The usage of LP 7290 remains comparatively regular throughout, despite the variety of literary texts included. Minor variants cluster in particular places, appearing on the first few folios, as well as around fols 62-68, 82-83 and 91-95. The last cluster coincides with the beginning of a new literary text, and may reflect transfer usage as the scribe adjusts to an exemplar in a different dialect; the other clusters may reflect similar changes, or possibly long pauses in copying (see p 38). The clusters consist of the following minor variants:

- fols 8-13: *mykell mekill moche* ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, pr part *-and -ynde*, *ar* ‘are’;
- fols 62-68: *ilke* ‘each’, *mocche* ‘much’, *ageynesse agaynesse* ‘against’, *bird* ‘third’, *giff* ‘give’, *pem* ‘them’;
- fols 82-83: *ilke* ‘each’, *agayne* ‘again’, *bep* ‘are’;
- fols 91-95: *much* ‘much’, *any* ‘any’, *fort forte* ‘until’, *monn* ‘man’, *pem* ‘them’, pres 3 sg *-is*, *arn arne* ‘are’

No permanent replacement of forms seems to coincide with these clusters. The forms *moc(c)he*, *much*, *mony*, *fort(e)*, *-ynde* and *bep* agree with the S Herefordshire localization, and cause no particular problem. The remaining forms are typically northern, but occur commonly as sporadic variants in fifteenth-century southern texts (see pp 238-39); it may, however, be noted that the text also contains some northern vocabulary, suggesting a northern origin for at least some of the texts: so *ay(e)* ‘always’, *askys* ‘ashes’, *werke* ‘ache’.

In summary, the most prominent dialectal element in LP 7290 agrees with the localization of the shared forms in S Herefordshire. However, the text also contains a number of forms that cannot be reconciled with this area: these include minor variants of a northern type, as well as forms that seem to reflect CMS usage. The latter occur as part of the regular usage, suggesting that the scribe's repertoire includes CMS forms as well as regional and colourless ones. The implications of this will be discussed below (p 89); for the moment it may be noted that the usage of LP 7290 is unlikely to provide fully trustworthy evidence for the dialect of a single area.

LP 7361

LP 7361 is the shortest of the three scribal texts here considered, and consists of a single literary text, Lelamour's translation of Macer. The material contains some variation, which, however, involves mainly variants that are fully reconcilable with a S Herefordshire localization. There seem to be no notable changes of usage within the text. Few forms occur solely in LP 7361; these include *togader* 'together' and *that-ilke* 'the same'. However, there are marked divergences in the proportions of certain variants compared with the other two texts: the forms *when*, *(n)adder*, *ham* 'them' and the present plural ending *-iþ* *-ith* occur as main or sole forms here, instead of *whan*, *edder*, *hem* and *-en/-yn*. Two distinctive forms, *þey* 'though' and *ar* 'ere' are shared with LP 7290, while initial *v-* for *f-*, e.g. *verne* 'fern', is a feature shared with LP 7362.

A few minor variants cannot be reconciled with the localization. These include the CMS-type forms *ony* 'any' and *eip̃er* 'or', both of which occur once only, the former at the beginning of the text. There are also some sporadic northern forms, including *er* 'are', *has hase* 'has' and the verbal endings *-is -ys*; apart from such minor variants, all the linguistic forms contained in LP 7361 can be assigned to the S Herefordshire area defined in Figure 12.

Of all three texts, LP 7362 contains the most varied material. Unlike the other miscellany, LP 7290, the present text shows clear-cut changes of usage between the literary texts. Few regularly used forms appear that are not also used in LPs 7290 or 7361; all distinctive forms exclusive to 7362 are confined to single literary texts and must be assumed to go back to the scribe's exemplar(s).

Two items in particular, 'or' and the past participle prefix, show striking changes. The text on fols 61r-63r, 153r-155v and 173r-186r, which includes three short medical texts and all the astrological texts, shows only the colourless *or*, and no past participle prefixes. The two longer texts, the medical handbook on fols 63v-153r and the gynecological work on fols 158-172, show *eiper* as the main form of 'or', as well as a high incidence (over 50 %) of the prefix *j-* in past participles.

No other forms show corresponding changes, although the distributions of some variants show patterns that may agree with them, and give some indications about the dialects of the scribe's exemplar(s). For example, the forms *strenghe* 'strength', *fytheth* 'fights', *feer feiR* 'fire' and *shuln shulln schuln suln* occur only in the early part of the medical handbook contained on fols 63v-153r, and might point to Norfolk usage, while northern-type forms like *agayne*, *werk-* 'work' (vb), *per* 'their', *mekyll* 'much', *pr* part *-ande* and *pres* 3 sg *-ys* occur almost exclusively in the astrological texts. A detailed analysis of such variations is out of place here; for the present purpose, it is sufficient to note that the changes and patterns suggest constrained selection working on dialectally varied exemplars.

A large part of the linguistic material of LP 7362, as of the other two texts, is localizable in the S Herefordshire area. However, like LP 7290, the text also contains a considerable number of forms that cannot be reconciled with this area. As in 7290, there are numerous regularly occurring forms that suggest a CMS element; apart from these, LP 7362 contains very large numbers of relicts, in particular northern ones, and is unlikely to provide first-rate dialect evidence.

Discussion

The three texts differ considerably as regards their dialectal composition and the coherence of their usage. All three contain a relatively large number of relicts; however, while the usage of LP 7361 is in the main localizable in a single area, and contains no regularly used alien forms, both LPs 7290 and 7362 seem to contain, as part of their regular usage, an element of Central Midland Standard (CMS) usage. The following forms, all of which have been defined by Samuels (1963 [1988]: 67, 1969 [1988]: 141) as diagnostic markers for CMS, occur in both texts:

siche ‘such’, *myche miche* ‘much’, *ony* ‘any’, *or* ‘ere’, *silf* ‘self’, *yove(n) 3oue* ‘given’

Of the types of forms that Samuels notes as CMS markers, *eiper eyper* ‘or’ and *neper* ‘nor’ also occur in parts of LP 7362, the *eiper* type appearing as the main form in a large part of the text. Most forms in Samuels’ list are, in fact, found in the two texts. The only exceptions are *stide* ‘stead’, *si3* ‘saw’ and spellings of the type *lijf* ‘life’; of these, the item ‘saw’ is not attested in either text, and the *lijf* type was not systematically collected. Of all these forms, only *myche miche*, *or* and *silf* can be reconciled with a S Herefordshire localization. It is significant that, apart from a couple of sporadic relicts, these are the only CMS-type forms to appear in LP 7361. The usages of LPs 7290 and 7362 seem, on the other hand, to reflect a repertoire that includes CMS forms alien to Herefordshire usage.

All the three texts seem, then, to contain the following four types of language:

- 1) Localizable dialect (S Herefordshire)
- 2) Colourless language
- 3) Central Midland Standard forms (in 7361 dialectally conditioned)
- 4) Relicts of a northern type

Usages like this, combining local, colourless and standard elements, seem to have become increasingly common in the fifteenth century (see Samuels 1981 [1988]: 86-87), and would typically arise as a result of contact with other varieties, both standard and non-standard. The combination of CMS forms with local and colourless usage seems to be particularly typical of medical texts in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; it may be assumed that scribes frequently copying such texts would become familiar with the CMS-type language in which they commonly appeared.

The combination of localizable dialect with other types of language does not, in itself, make a text unsuitable for use as evidence; the crucial question is the proportion of language of the first type. For example, LP 7520 in the present study shows CMS influence, but its strong overall character of N Herefordshire dialect still makes it useful as evidence (see pp 226-27). The same is not true of the present texts, the usage of which is comparatively colourless. Moreover, given the complexity of the texts, it is impossible to assess whether any given difference between the profiles reflects the usage of the exemplars or of the scribes themselves.

While none of the texts is thus suitable as first-rate evidence for a localizable dialect, LP 7361 shows a coherent and regionally constrained usage, and does not seem to contain any alien elements in regular use. Its relative homogeneity may reflect narrower scribal constraints, or simply an exemplar containing less exotic language. LP 7361 may, consequently, be used as evidence for the S Herefordshire area that was defined in Figure 12; it should, however, be used with some caution, bearing in mind its relative colourlessness and relationship to the other two texts. The two longer texts, 7290 and 7362, cannot, on the other hand, be relied on to reflect the usage of a single area, even if the CMS forms are disregarded. Both these texts should only be considered as corroborative evidence, and even then with great caution.

7310 Oxford, Bodleian Laud Misc 553, fols 7v-19r; s xv (*LALME* 7310)

The manuscript consists of 77 folios. It is a collection of medical and related texts, mostly in English, copied by several scribes; the text analysed for the present study is a herbal contained on fols 7v-19r, written by a single scribe. The hand is a neat anglicana formata, with secretary-hand single-compartment **a** used throughout. The scribe frequently omits words and lines. The manuscript is relatively large and beautifully laid out, with illuminated initials. The original manuscript had lost at least six leaves before it was bound together with the other texts; after the binding, the folios of were numbered 8-13, 14^a, 14^b, 15^a, 15^b, 16-19.

The text is followed by the colophon *Explicit liber de uirtutibus herbarum* on fol 19r; the *LALME* entry refers to the text by this name. Elsewhere, the herbal is commonly known as *Agnus Castus* after its opening words. It survives in 29 MSS, including a Latin and a Welsh version, and has been edited by Gösta Brodin (1950); the edition is mainly based on a MS in the Royal Library, Stockholm, with additions from others, including the present one. According to Brodin (1950: 103), the present MS contains the ‘best’ version of the text despite its gaps, and ‘seems to be the oldest of the known English MSS’.

The library catalogue dates the MS as a whole to the fifteenth century. The *MED*, which uses the text of *Agnus Castus* as a source, dates it to *ante* 1500 (roughly the last quarter of the fifteenth century). This dating seems remarkably late for the text, and will be discussed below. The analysis is based on a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library, and covers the text in its entirety.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the language of LP 7310 was localized in southern Herefordshire, near the Gloucestershire border; the localization corresponds roughly to the area around the town of Ross-on-Wye on the geographical map. The text is relatively short; however, because of its repetitive character, certain items occur frequently, and show a fairly regular usage.

The following set of distinctive forms may be used for localization:

eche ‘each’, *soche* ‘such’, *whuch* ‘which’, *moche* ‘much’, *mony meny* ‘many’,
eny ‘any’, *pulk* ‘the same’, *bote* ‘but’, *pei pey* ‘though’, *noþur* ‘nor’, *lengeþ*
‘length’, *strengþ* ‘strength’, *goude* ‘good’, *hyr* ‘hear’, *vern* ‘fern’, *fuyr* ‘fire’,
hulle ‘hill’, *furst* ‘first’, *wordle* ‘world’, *-lich* ‘-ly’, *he* ‘she’, *hur* ‘her’, *hij* ‘they’,
ham ‘them’, *buth buþ* ‘are’

The forms *eche*, *moche*, *eny*, *-lich*, as well as the initial *v-* in *vern*, point to a general location in the southern part of the country, while *mony*, *fuyr*, *hulle*, *furst*, *hur* and *buth buþ* suggest the western part. Within the remaining area, a number of forms, including *meny*, *pei pey*, *noþur*, *hyr*, *wordle*, *hij* and *ham* exclude Worcestershire and the eastern part of Gloucestershire. The distributions of *goud(e)* and *he* exclude all except the extreme south of Herefordshire, while *whuch(e)*, *pulk(e)* and *bote* exclude the western part of the county, as well as all except the extreme northwest of Gloucestershire. The most likely localization thus centres on the southeastern extreme of Herefordshire, including the immediately adjoining part of Gloucestershire; this is illustrated in Figure 13 using the forms *whuch(e)*, *bote* and *goud(e)*.

Variation in the text is restricted to a few commonly occurring items. The variants *mony many meny*, *bote/bot* and *when/whan* occur in almost equal proportions; all are common in the area, and occur in free variation in several texts. On the orthographic level, the text contains an example of what looks like lexically conditioned variation: the spelling for ‘sh-’ is virtually always <sch> in the auxiliary verbs *schal*, *schalt*, *schold* etc, while it is <sh> in lexical items like *shape*, *shephurdespors*. Otherwise, the usage is very regular indeed. A few forms occur at the beginning only, and probably indicate a stretch of transfer usage; these include the forms *pei* ‘they’, *clupeth* ‘call’ and *mochel* ‘much’. These forms are consistent with the localization; however, as they occur only on the first page of the text, they should be disregarded as evidence.

All forms in the text seem to agree with the SE Herefordshire - NW Gloucestershire area, and it would seem that, despite its relative shortness and limited

Figure 13

Localization of LP 7310



range of forms, the text is well suited for use as evidence for the dialect of S Herefordshire.

The only significant problem concerns the dating. Even if the late fifteenth-century date is accepted, the linguistic forms should probably not be used uncritically as evidence for such a late date: the usage is very conservative, and might reflect that of an exemplar of considerably earlier date. There are reasons to assume that the scribe's behaviour might be closer to the *literatim* type than to translating: his frequent habit of omitting words and lines, together with his use of a relatively formal script, point in this direction. This might also account for his retention of spellings like *beon* 'bees' and *eorþenote* 'earth-nut' with the digraph <eo>, already rare in the late fourteenth century (see p 355). The forms that occur in the beginning only, *mochel*, *chupeth* and *þei*, might reflect his own preferred forms, suggesting roughly the same area but, in the case of *þei*, a more progressive usage.

This would agree with Brodin's view that the text represents the best and oldest extant version of the herbal, and that the other 'good' texts, including the Stockholm MS, were copied from an exemplar closely related to it. It seems likely that the present manuscript was copied from an older text, and that the scribe did little to modernize the language, whether out of antiquarian motives or because the usage was still familiar enough to be acceptable to him. Antiquarianism would not be inconsistent with the external characteristics of the manuscript: the size, script and illumination mark it out as a presentation copy rather than just a practical handbook.

The dating should, consequently, not be applied too strictly. It will be safest to consider the language simply as belonging to the fifteenth century, and bear in mind the possible archaistic tendencies. However, allowing for such uncertainties, the regularity and strongly dialectal character of the language should make the text excellent material for dialect study.

The manuscript consists of 90 folios, and is a collection of various tracts, chiefly of medical and related interest, copied by several scribes and dated variously to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The scribal text localized as LP 7340 in *LALME* consists of two short treatises on urines, titled *De regionibus Urine: of regions of þe vryn* (fol 110r) and *Indicium Urinarium Secundum Magistrum Galterium Agilon* (fol 119r). The hand is a regular and neat textura that makes no difference between the shapes of the letters *y* and *þ*. There are large decorated initials and marginal headings; some marginal scribbles, relating to the contents, appear in a secretary hand.

The analysis is based on a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library, containing only the relevant portion of the manuscript. The text is analysed in its entirety.

Analysis

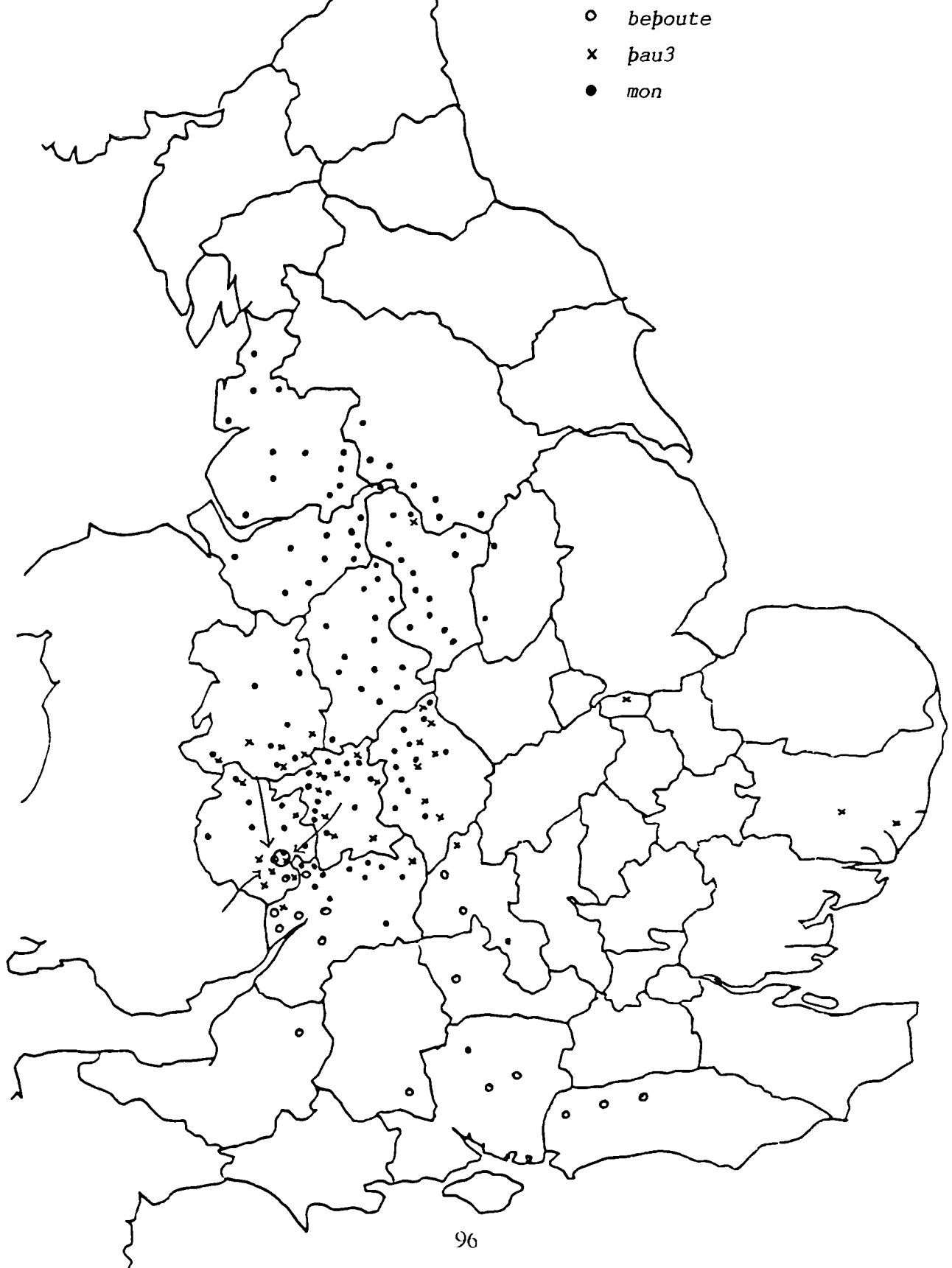
In *LALME*, LP 7340 was localized in E Herefordshire, in an area corresponding roughly to the Woolhope-Much Marcle area on the geographical map. The text is relatively short and yields a limited range of material; however, because of its fairly repetitive character, certain forms occur very frequently. The following forms may be used for localization.

seche ‘such’, *wheche* ‘which’, *meche* ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *ony* ‘any’, *þeke* ‘the same’, *þorw3 þrow3* ‘through’, *bepoute bepout* ‘without’, *þaw3* ‘though’, *vome uome* ‘foam’, *mon* ‘man’, *nome* ‘name’, *furst frust* ‘first’, *hit* ‘it’, *bup* ‘are’, *schuld* ‘should’, *han* ‘have’

The forms *wheche* and *meche* suggest, in general terms, a southern, non-central dialect, while the spellings with <u> in *furst* (and in other words, e.g. *fulfullyng* ‘fulfilling’) and with <o> in words like *mon*, *nome* indicate a western area. Together with the latter spellings, the southern feature of *v-* for initial *f* as in *vome*, as well as the southern form

Figure 14

Localization of LP 7340



bup, delimit the possible localization to the SWML area consisting of the northern and eastern parts of Herefordshire as well as Worcestershire and N Gloucestershire. Most of the latter area, as well as a large part of S Worcestershire, is excluded by *meche*, *schuld* and *han*. Within the remaining area, the distributions of the strongly regional forms *peke*, *prow3*, *bepout(e)* and *paw3* combine to limit the localization fairly precisely to the Woolhope-Much Marcle area in SE Herefordshire. This is illustrated in Figure 14, using the distributions of *bepoute*, *pau3* and *mon*.

The usage is fairly regular, with minor variants occurring mainly towards the beginning. These include *if* 'if', *it* 'it', *pai* 'they', *bep ben* 'are', beside the main forms *hit*, *pey*, *3if*, *bup*. The form *frust* occurs as the main form of 'first' to begin with, but is gradually replaced by *furst*. No significant change of usage seems to take place with the change of literary text at fol 119r.

Nearly all forms in the analysed material agree with the localization; exceptions include sporadic, once-only variants like *nor* 'nor', *hase* 'has'. For these, as well as for the spellings *hand* 'hand', *standyp* 'stands', a Chancery Standard element would be the most obvious explanation; however, the fourteenth-century dating, if reliable, would preclude this. The form *ony* 'any' which occurs twice, is likewise untypical of the SWML area, and tends to occur only in texts that show some influence of the so-called Central Midland Standard (see pp 41-42). While no other diagnostic CMS forms occur in the present text, they are in general common in medical texts; on the other hand, the minor variants taken together might suggest a NEML element, into which *ony* would also fit. Whatever the case, all these variant forms should be treated as relicts.

The language of the text is very progressive considering the dating in the library catalogue (1856), which places this portion of the manuscript in the fourteenth century. As the text is relatively southern, and otherwise strongly dialectal, the complete absence of a number of traditional forms would be surprising in so early a text: there are no examples of *h*- forms for 'she' and 'they', of the *-liche* type for '-ly', the earlier present participle ending in *-inde* *-ende*, or forms of the *habbe(n)*, *segge(n)* types. As it is possible that the catalogue dating was to some extent influenced by the textura script, it may be safest to assume that it belongs to any time between the late fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries.

The text should provide good evidence for the dialect of E Herefordshire; however, its shortness should be taken into account, and forms that only occur once or twice should be treated with caution. Those forms that occur only at the beginning, as well as sporadic alien forms like *nor*, *hase* should be discounted as evidence. Finally, the uncertainty about the date should be remembered, and the language should not be used as definitive evidence for fourteenth-century usage.

4.2.4 *Piers Plowman*: LPs 7301, 7302, 7320 and 7330

The Herefordshire material contains three manuscripts of the C-text of *Piers Plowman*: MSS S (LP 7300), N (LP 7320) and K (LP 7330).¹⁰ The C-text is held to represent the third and last of the main versions of *Piers Plowman* as worked and revised by the author.¹¹ Its composition is dated to the 1380's, probably before 1387 (Donaldson 1949: 19; Pearsall 1994: 9). It consists of a Prologue and 22 passus, and survives in eighteen manuscripts, two short fragments and a number of mixed-text manuscripts, usually combined with parts of the A-text. The earliest surviving manuscripts are dated to the late fourteenth century and may not be far removed in time from the composition of the text, the majority belong to the early fifteenth century. As regards the dating of the present manuscripts, there is a great deal of disagreement; a rough consensus would place the K text to the late fourteenth century or the turn of the fifteenth, and both S and N somewhat later, to the beginning or first half of the fifteenth century.

The C-text manuscripts have been divided into three subgroups (see Donaldson 1949: 230-1). While the textually 'best' one (the *l*-group) consists only of three mixed texts, the remaining ones are divided into a 'better' *i*-group and an 'inferior' *p*-group. All three Herefordshire texts belong to the latter; within which they fall into the category described by Donaldson (1949: 231) as 'for one reason or another, inferior [to the others]'. The editions by Pearsall (1994) and Schmidt (1995) both use MS X (Huntington San Marino HM 143) of the *i*-group as a basis; a critical edition with a full

apparatus of variant readings, complementing the editions of the A-text by Kane (1960) and of the B-text by Kane and Donaldson (1975), is being carried out by Russell.

The dialectal distribution of the manuscripts of the C-text shows a distinctive geographical pattern: of the sixteen manuscripts that can be localized on dialectal grounds, all but one are localized within a limited area in the Southwest Midlands. This distribution is markedly different from those of the A- and B-versions of the poem: the localized manuscripts of the B-version are mainly centred in the London area, while those of the A-version seem to be scattered in the peripheries in relation to the other versions. The significance of these distributions has been discussed by Samuels (1985 [1988]) and Beadle (1994). Samuels (1985 [1988]: 77) notes that, of the C-text manuscripts, the *i*-group texts occupy a more central position in the Malvern area, while the *p*-group texts radiate outward. It might, on the other hand, be noted that the *p*-group texts tend to be more easily localizable on dialectal grounds: nine are mapped in *LALME*, while the *i*-group texts, especially the ‘best’ ones, tend to show mixed usages. This, and the clustering of the localized *p*-texts, suggests that the local-level diffusion of the text envisaged by Beadle (1994: 78-79) may be particularly relevant to the *p*-group:

A further point... concerns the transmission of the B and C versions of *Piers Plowman* on a specifically local level... it looks as if exemplars moved out from the centre in some sort of graduated way, through counties adjacent to one another, rather than by leaps and bounds across wider areas of space.

The dialectal coherence of the *p*-group manuscripts suggests that this recension of the text might have been diffused in a graduated way through not only counties but parishes. In contrast, the *i*-group texts, with their various dialectal influences (see Samuels 1985 [1988]: 76-77) suggest a much less local distribution.

The three texts localized in Herefordshire will be considered in turn below. Some of the background work to the *LALME* localizations was published by Samuels (1985 [1988]) in his article ‘Langland’s Dialect’, in which he gives lists of ‘specific forms’ relating to the localization of each manuscript of *Piers Plowman*; these provide a useful comparison for the present analysis.

The manuscript consists of 64 folios and contains an imperfect version of the C-text of *Piers Plowman*. The text is copied out by two scribes, of which the first (A) is responsible for the first five quires (fols 1-39), and the second (B) for the remaining three (fols 40-64). The hands look clearly different, although they produce a similar script; both write a clear but rough anglicana formata, with some secretary forms. The text of the poem ends with the second passus of Dobet (passus XIX of the full C-text), with the colophon 'explicit secundus et ultimus de dobett'. The text thus lacks the last three passus of the full version; there are also some gaps within it. Following Skeat (1866), the text has been denoted with the siglum S.

The text is here analysed partly from the manuscript itself, partly from a microfilm. The analysis is based on the entire text, with the exception of fols 56-57 and 63v-64, which are largely illegible.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the text was localized in S Herefordshire, about halfway between Hereford and Monmouth. The localization was based on a very small sample, consisting of the first two quires (fols 1-16); this includes less than half the text produced by scribe A, and there is no reference to a second scribe. The analysis does consequently not stand up very well to the methodological guidelines later developed, and a fuller analysis will be needed for the present study.

The stretches copied by scribes A and B were kept apart for the purpose of the present analysis, and separate profiles were compiled. The usages are very similar, the differences mainly involving purely orthographical features (W-features); the most notable are shown in Figure 15. As the table shows, these differences are fairly clear-cut. For example, scribe A uses <gh> more frequently than yogh in words like *lyght ryght broght*, while B always writes *ly3t ry3t bou3t*; also, A uses exclusively <a> in words like *fayr fair* 'fair', while B favours <e> as in *feyR*. However, apart from these purely

Item	LP 7301 (A)	LP 7302 (B)
ERE	or er ((ar))	er 9 or 3 her 1 here 1
NOT	nat (>) not	not (> nat no3t))
YET	3ut (> 3it)	3it 6 3ut 5
SELF	silf selue	silf (silue) ((selue))
CHURCH	churche (chirche)	churche
SILVER	siluer seluer	siluer
-GHT	-ght -3t	-3t
FAIR	fayR ((faiR))	feyR fayR
FELL HELD	ful huld-	fil hild-
<i>noun pl</i>	-us ((-9 -es))	-9 (-us) ((-es))
I	j (y) ((ich ych))	y ((j)) (((ich i°)))
SHE	sche > hue ((he she))	hue 6 sche 4 he 3
HER	heR > huR	huR
US	ous (vs)	vs ((ous))
THEIR	heR > huR	huR ((heR))
<i>pr pl</i>	-en -un -up ((-ep))	-ep -up (-en -un)
ARE	ben ((buþ beþ aren))	ben (beþ) ((buþ aren))
WOULD	wold- ((wuld-))	wuld (wold-)

Figure 15: Differences in linguistic usage between LPs 7301 (scribe A) and 7302 (scribe B)

orthographic features, differences between the A and B stretches tend to involve relative frequency rather than absolute choice. It seems likely that both stretches reproduce in part the usage of a single exemplar, the differences reflecting the respective repertoires of each scribe. Altogether, the table would appear to reflect constrained selection within a fairly limited dialectal range.

The differences between the A and B usages have no obvious geographical significance, and it seems that, while the profiles are not identical, they are so closely similar as to reflect, for all intents and purposes, a single dialectal contribution. This contribution may, then, be localized, using the dialectally distinctive forms that occur regularly in both profiles. The following forms were used by Samuels (1985 [1988]: 76, 84 n 52) to localize the present text:

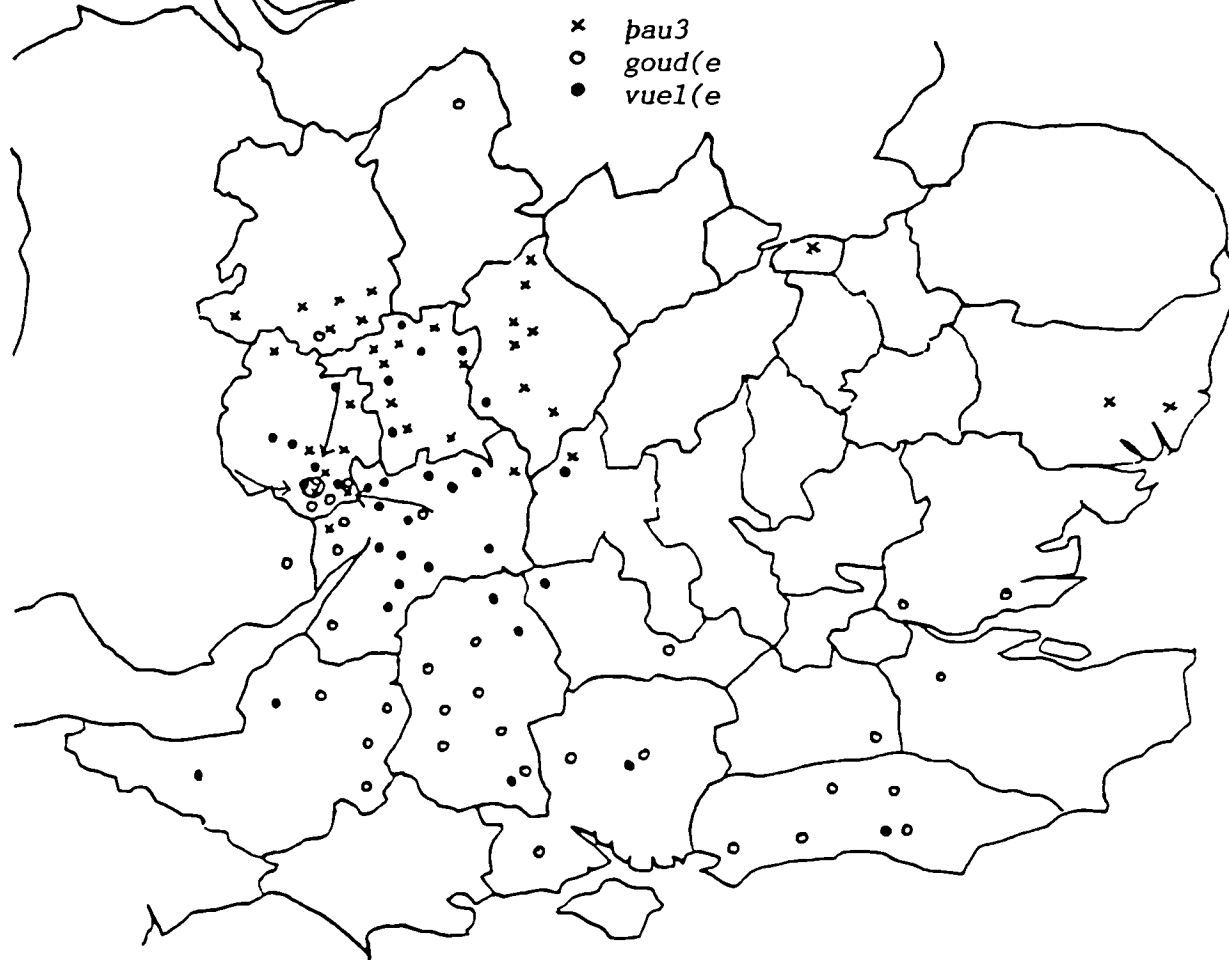
swiche 'such', *meny* 'many', *por3* 'through', *nat* 'not', *3ut* 'yet', *sulf silue* 'self', *goud* 'good', *eschte* 'asked', *hyre/huyre* 'hear', *aftur* 'after', *wordl(e)* 'world', *hure* 'her', noun pl *-us*; *gunnep* 'begin' (prpl), *pa* part *-ud*, *fulde* 'felled'.

Some of these will not be suitable for the present purpose. The unabbreviated form *aftur* occurs only as a minor variant in A; similarly, *sulf* occurs mainly in the early part of A. The form *eschte* occurs only once towards the beginning of A, and the regular form throughout the text is *ask-*. The items for *gunnep*, *-ud* and *fulde*, finally, are not included in the present questionnaire.

The remaining forms may be used, and can be supplemented with a number of other distinctive forms that occur regularly in both scribal profiles. The modified list might contain the following items:

swich 'such', *moche* 'much', *meny* 'many', *fram* 'from', *por3* 'through', *ac* 'but', *pau3* 'though', *nat* 'not', *3ut* 'yet', *silf* 'self', *po* 'then', *goud* 'good', *deyde deide* 'died', *hur huyr hyr* 'hear', *dradde* 'dreaded' (pa sg), *fuyr* 'fire', *furst(e)* 'first', *dnde* 'did', *vuele* 'evil', *wordle* 'world', *hue* 'she', *hur* 'her/their', *hy* 'they', *schuld-* 'should'.

Figure 16 Localization of the shared usage of
LP 7301-2



Of these forms, *moche*, *3ut*, *po*, *fuyr*, *furst(e)*, *dude* and *hur* suggest generally a southern or western localization. A large number of forms occur only to the south of central Herefordshire: so *meny*, *fram*, *goud*, *deyde deide*, *hur huyr hyr*, *wordle* and *hy*. Of these, *goud* is the southernmost form, excluding all except the extreme south of Herefordshire, as well as all of Worcestershire, E Gloucestershire and the areas to the east. A southern limit is provided by *pau3*, the distribution of which is concentrated in E Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Together, the distributions of *swich*, *meny*, *pau3*, *goud* and *vuel* delimit the likely localization to a small part of S Herefordshire; the three latter distributions are shown in Figure 16.

As Figure 15 shows, both A and B contain an amount of variation. This mainly involves forms that commonly vary in the area, e g *when/whan*, *merye murye myrye* and *ben bep*. Neither scribal text seems to contain forms that stand out as incompatible with the localization. Certain features of grammar and lexis are rare in the Herefordshire LME material outside the *Piers Plowman* MSS. These include archaic features like the grammatical distinction between *ac* and *but* and the use of genitive plurals in *-en(e)*, which go back to authorial usage; it is impossible to tell whether they are retained because they form a living part of the repertoires of the scribes, or to preserve the linguistic and stylistic character of the poem. The alliterative usage contains a number of forms that reflect Langland's poetic practice and should be excluded from the Herefordshire evidence; these include, in particular, northern lexical items and phonological variants (e g *kirke* 'church', *gaf* 'gave'; see Kane 1981: 43-44).

The S text thus seems to be the work of two scribes copying from a single exemplar. As the usages are similar, showing mainly differences in the relative frequency of forms, it is likely that both scribes reproduce the exemplar fairly closely, and that the dialects of the scribes, as well as that of the exemplar, belong to the same limited area. The text may, accordingly, be treated as a single dialectal contribution. The material should be well suited for dialect study, with two reservations. Firstly, even though the text is taken to reflect the dialect of a single area, the separate usages of each scribe should not be lost sight of; secondly, some forms that go back to authorial usage may not reflect living language at the time of copying.

The manuscript consists of 124 folios, and contains a complete version of the C-text of *Piers Plowman*. It is the work of a single scribe, who writes a large and clear anglicana formata. Titles, colophons and Latin citations are usually written in textura; initials are decorated, citations and important words are framed in red, and there are occasional other ornaments. Titles are given for the two main divisions of the poem: 'here by-gynneþ þe boke of pyris plowman' (fol 1r) and 'hic incipit visio pdci willi de dowel' (fol 51r); the first book and every passus of the second have descriptive colophons.

Corrections are made both by the main scribe and another contemporary hand. In most cases, the earlier reading has been erased and the new wording written over the erasure; the other hand has added entire missing lines. The two hands look similar, but show consistent differences in certain letter-forms, e.g. **d**, **w**, **e** and **s**. The additions by the second hand tend to follow the wording of the C-text (as found in most manuscripts) exactly, indicating that he was checking the text against another copy. There are occasional marginal scribbles in later hands.

The text was not collated by Skeat (1866: xlvii), who describes it as 'a most disappointing MS, as it looks so promising, and is yet so unsatisfactory'. While all manuscripts of the C-text may be assumed to contain some misreadings or 'corruptions', the present text not only contains obvious misreadings but, more interestingly, seems to have been thoroughly translated. The translation is not confined to the levels of morphology and spelling, but includes numerous substitutions of lexical items, as well as some rewriting of syntactic structure. This suggests a deliberate reworking, recognized by Skeat (1873: xlvii-xlviii):

It is, in fact, clear that the scribe has, as it were, *glossed* his words, by substituting easy ones in the place of hard ones, regardless of alliteration. Nor has he always done this correctly; for in l. 116 for example, the word *lacke* means *to blame*, not *to spare*... The reader who takes the trouble to look up [examples given]... will easily satisfy himself that the MS is utterly worthless as regards its readings...

Although perhaps ‘worthless’ from a textual point of view, the text is of great potential value for dialect study. For the present purpose, it does not matter that the translator seems to have been quite insensitive to the literary qualities of the poem; on the contrary, his modifications are likely to give a truer picture of an actual dialect than the ‘better’ texts of *Piers Plowman*, which follow the original more closely. The translation is thus of considerable interest, and will be discussed below, after the initial analysis of the collected material.

The text is denoted by the siglum N. It is analysed from a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library and from paper copies. The analysis is based on four sections of the text, comprising fols 1-30, 45-54, 70-79 and 95-104; together, these sections amount to *ca* 48 % of the entire text.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the language of LP 7320 was localized in the extreme southeast of Herefordshire, near the Gloucestershire border. Samuels (1985 [1988]: 76, 83 n 48) lists the following forms as distinctive:

many (*meny mony*) ‘many’, *fram* ‘from’, *paw(e)* ‘though’, *no* ‘nor’, *þan* ‘then’ ‘thence’, *goud* ‘good’, *hyre* ‘hear’, *3ulde 3ild* ‘yield’, *a* ‘he’, *he* ‘she’, *hire* ‘her’, *hy hi* ‘they’, *bygunne* ‘begin’, *afille* ‘fell’, *last* ‘lest’.

A few modifications to the list will be necessary. The last three items do not belong to the present questionnaire, and should be discarded. The forms *a* and *meny*, *mony* occur very sporadically, and should not be used as primary evidence; similarly, *no* occurs mainly towards the beginning, and *3ulde 3ild* do not appear in the sections here analysed. On the other hand, more forms can be added to the list, taking into consideration their diagnostic value as suggested by the *LALME* material. The modified list might, then, contain the following forms:

soche ‘such’, *moche* ‘much’, *fram* ‘fram’, *þorow* ‘through’, *by-þoute(n)* ‘without’, *bote* ‘but’, *þaw(e þau3(e* ‘though’, *ar* ‘ere’, *3ut* ‘yet’, *þan (þo)* ‘then’, *whas* ‘whose’, *goud* ‘good’, *deyde dyede* ‘died’, *hyre hire* ‘hear’, *drad* ‘dreaded’ (pasg), *prute prude* ‘pride’, *fuyR* ‘fire’, *ferst furst* ‘first’, *dude* ‘did’, *vuel* ‘evil’, *byhilde byhylde* ‘beheld’ (pasg), *wordle* ‘world’, *he* ‘she’, *hy hi* ‘they’, *ham* ‘them’, *ben bep* ‘are’, *lyfe* ‘live’

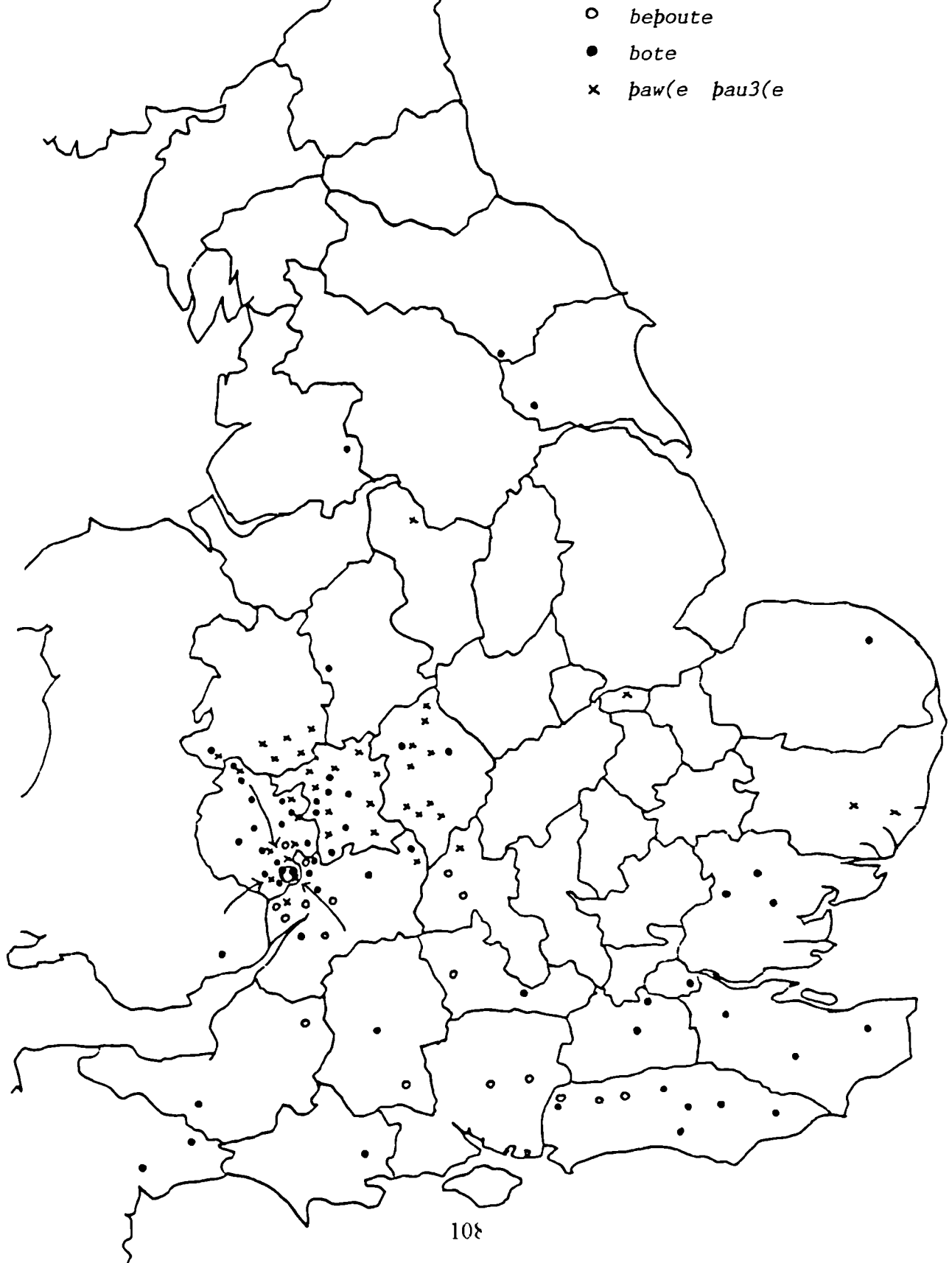
The spellings with <u> for OE *y* suggest in general terms a southern or western dialect, while *þo* and *bep* exclude the northern part of the West Midland area. A large number of forms limit the localization to the areas south of mid-Herefordshire; these include *fram*, *þorow*, *ar*, *3ut*, *þan*, *þo*, *goud*, *deyde*, *hyre hire*, *drad*, *ferst*, *wordle*, *he*, *hy hi* and *bep*. The forms *hy hi* and *whas* exclude Worcestershire and the eastern part of Gloucestershire, while *goud* and *hyre hire* limit the likely localization to two areas, consisting of the southern extreme of Herefordshire and the northwestern corner of Gloucestershire on the one hand, and a more southern area including Somerset and Wiltshire on the other. The latter area is excluded by the forms *by-þoute(n)*, *þaw(e þau3(e* and *lyfe*, which, together with *bote*, delimit the likely localization to the southeastern corner of Herefordshire, corresponding to the area about or somewhat to the east of Ross-on-Wye on the geographical map. This localization, which is probably as exact as the methodology allows one to be, is illustrated in Figure 17, using the distributions of *bote*, *byþoute* and *þau3(e þaw(e*.

The text contains a fairly large amount of linguistic variation; however, for most items there is one clearly dominant form, and the variants are generally minor ones. Virtually all forms that occur in the text agree with the localization. Certain minor variants should be considered relicts; these are mostly of a northern type, and include *þer* ‘their’, *þem* ‘them’, present 3 sg *-es -ys*, present 2 sg *-es* and present pl *-es*. They are not numerous, and include only such northernisms that occur frequently in Southern manuscripts of the fifteenth century (see pp 238-39).

Few changes take place within the text. A number of forms occur only towards the beginning, and may be discounted as working-in usage: these include *3yf* ‘if’, *þey þei*

Figure 17

Localization of LP 7320



thow ‘though’, *no* ‘nor’, *yuel iuel euel* ‘evil’ and *a* ‘he’. Apart from these abandoned forms, the following gradual shifts take place:

SUCH	suche	>	soche suche
THOUGH	þaw(e	>	þau3(e
NOT	nou3t ((no3t))	>	no3t ((not nou3t))
FIRE	fire fyre ((fure))	>	fuyR 6 fure 1
YET	3it(e 3et 3yt 3ut	>	3ut(e

The changes do not seem to coincide or form discernable patterns: for example, the change from *þaw(e* to *þau3(e* may be contrasted with what looks like a change from the spelling *plou3man* (6 times, fols 70-79) to *plowman* (4 times, fols 95-104).¹² It may be assumed that both spellings are acceptable within the scribe’s repertoire.

It is notable that many of the abandoned forms occur commonly in the C-text tradition; in particular, the forms *no* and *a* were considered by Samuels to belong to the archetypal usage of *Piers Plowman* (Samuels 1985 [1988]: 78). As the regular linguistic usage of the text differs greatly from the other versions of the C-text, and can be precisely localized, it may be assumed that the changes reflect a gradual drift towards fuller translation. When the abandoned forms and the few obvious relicts are excluded, the text should provide excellent evidence for the dialect of SE Herefordshire.

The translation

It was noted in chapter 2 that scribal translation may be expected to work differently on different levels of language (see pp 30-31). Benskin and Laing (1981: 93-98) have suggested a hierarchy for the likelihood of translation, based on the size of spans of text to be held in the scribe’s memory; according to this, orthography and morphology are much more readily translated than syntax:

A scribal text of which the spelling and morphology are homogeneous need not... provide reliable evidence for the syntax of the scribal dialect. On the other hand, a text in which the syntax is translated, is unlikely to preserve the spelling and morphology of an exemplar. (Benskin and Laing 1981: 96)

The treatment of lexis is in general unpredictable: while lexical items are often left untouched, there are some well-known examples of thorough lexical translation.¹³ On all levels of language, translation tends to be resisted in rhyming and alliterative position.

The N text seems to have undergone a thorough translation that affects all levels of language. There is, of course, no certainty that the usage on the most commonly affected levels, like the W-features of orthography, reflects the same scribal translation as that on other levels: it is in principle possible that the changes in lexis and syntax were made by a translating scribe at an earlier stage, and that the present scribe has contributed his own usage only on the level of orthography. However, it seems quite likely that the present scribe is responsible for the entire translation: this is suggested by the dialectal coherence of the language as a whole, as well as a number of erasures and changes in the manuscript, which tend to involve words that clearly cause problems to him, e g *lacke* (see p 117 below).

A detailed study of the translation is beyond the scope of the present study; however, a brief discussion, with selected examples, will be of interest. The Prologue and first six passus of the present text (MS N) are here compared to three other manuscripts: MS Huntington San Marino HM 143 (MS X), generally agreed to be closer related to the author's original than most surviving texts (see e g Donaldson 1949: 230; cf also p 98 above), and the two other C-text manuscripts localized in Herefordshire, MSS K and S.¹⁴ Besides comparison with these three texts, the textual notes in Schmidt's (1995) edition are consulted to ascertain which readings are unique to N; the notes are not designed to give a full record of all manuscript readings, but the coverage should be full enough for the present purpose.

In the examples, only the X reading is given where the four manuscripts agree (minor differences in spelling excepted); the line references are to Schmidt's edition (1995). The Prologue and passus are denoted with P and I-VI respectively.

Changes in morphology and syntax

The N translator makes considerable changes to the grammatical forms and structures in the *Piers Plowman* text; for the sake of clarity, the present discussion is limited to a few selected features that illustrate certain discernible patterns and tendencies in his work.

A few changes seem to introduce more conservative usage; this is particularly notable in the noun and pronoun systems. Weak noun plurals are much more common in N than in the other texts: the analysed passages contain the forms *cheken*, *dou3tren*, *ey3en*, *hesten*, *massen* for ‘cheeks’, ‘daughters’, ‘eyes’, ‘commands’, ‘masses’. Of these, only ‘eyes’ shows *-en* plurals in K and S, while all have *-es* plurals in X. That N alone would retain the original forms is hardly plausible considering its textual situation.

The personal pronoun system in N similarly differs from those in the other three manuscripts: apart from a couple of stray occurrences, *she* and *they* type forms are not used. In the singular, the masculine and feminine forms are identical, both being spelled *he* throughout; occasional *a* and *sche* are clearly relicts and occur mainly towards the beginning. For the feminine singular, all the other texts show a proportion of *she*-type forms, and, according to Samuels (1985 [1988]: 80), the alliterative practice shows that both the *he heo* and *she* types belonged to the authorial usage. As the N scribe uses *he* throughout without regard for alliteration, it seems that the *she* type was still alien to his dialect.

The third person plural regularly appears as *hy* in N (P 38, 108, 145, 181; I 8 *etc.*). The corresponding forms in the other texts are X *thei*, *pei*, *they*; K *pei*, *pey* and S *pey*, *pei*; in the latter two, *hy* also appears as a minor variant. Other C-text manuscripts show a variety of forms for ‘they’, and the form seldom appears in alliterative position; the appearance of *hy* in several texts, including MS G (Cambridge, University Library Dd.III.13), which is both textually and dialectally close to N, suggests that the form may not have been introduced by the translator. Either way, the forms suggest that the translator’s own system of personal pronouns had in the nominative a

simple distinction between singular *he* and plural *hy*, and that his system did not include the *she* and *they* types.

Most changes made by the translator do not, however, produce more conservative language, but rather show a regularizing or (with hindsight) modernizing tendency, avoiding, it seems, archaic and literary forms and structures. Thus, while the translator seems to favour weak noun plurals, other archaic features of the noun system are replaced. The older genitive plural in *-(en)e* is generally changed to *-es*: in I 95, the X reading *for no lordene loue* is translated to *for no lordes loue*; likewise, in VI 95, the X reading *menne ware* is given as *mennes ware* N. The *-(en)e* forms were clearly obsolescent at this stage, and scribes of other C-text manuscripts had problems with them: the S scribe renders the above example as *ffor non mordyne loue*.

Another archaic feature of the language of *Piers Plowman*, as it appears in most C-text manuscripts, is the retention of Class II weak verb forms (e.g. OE *lufian*). These are for the most part regularized in N; for example, *loue* for X *louye* occurs in P 149, III 31, 35, 144 and VI 145; *louep* for X *louyeth* in III 58, 161; *haten* for X *hatien* in IV 110; and *wonen* for X *wonyen* in II 79. In all, the analysed sections contain twelve examples of forms with *i y* out of a possible total of eighty; the proportion is considerably smaller than in the other texts (37 out of 62 in K, 30 out of 54 in S; in X, forms with *i y* also appear to be dominant).

N also shows the loss of the functional distinction between *ac* and *but*, retained regularly in most C-text manuscripts but, to judge from the other Herefordshire texts, obsolescent by the fifteenth century. Apart from very occasional relicts, both types are rendered as *bote* (see e.g. P 6, 62, 78, 134, 191; I 24, 42, 106, 115, 122, 185 etc). The composite form *but yf* 'unless' also tends to be replaced with simple *bote*, although the replacement is not as regular as that of *ac*.

The adverb *forthy* 'therefore' seems to have been unfamiliar to the translator, who replaces it in various ways, some clearly based on misunderstanding:

P 201	X forthy	N for-þan
I 32	X forthy	N þ <u>er</u> fore
I 154	X forþi is	N for he ys
I 170	X forthy	N þ <u>er</u> fore
I 200	X forþi	N for
II 147	X forthy worcheth (<i>imp pl</i>)	
	N ffor hy worcheþ (<i>pr pl</i>)	
III 73	X forthy leue lordes leueth suche wrytynges	
	<i>'therefore, dear lords, leave such writings'</i>	
	N ffor þy leue lordes loue lefe suche wrytyng	
	<i>'for your dear lord's love, leave such writing'</i>	

The scribe's unfamiliarity with *forþy* might indicate regional variation in the use of the form; on the other hand, taken together with his treatment of lexis, discussed below (see p 116 ff), it might also reflect a difference between the scribe's own usage and a literary language with which he was not familiar, and to which the relatively archaic *forþy* might at this stage have belonged.

Unsyncopated present 3 sg forms are generally substituted for the syncopated ones that occur in the other manuscripts: so III 306 (X *byt*, N *biddeþ*), 386 (X *halt*, N *haldeþ*), 406 (X *rat*, KS *ret*, N *redeþ*) and V 88 (X *fynt*, N *fyndeþ*). Only the form *worþ* 'becomes' is common in N; in other dental-stem verbs, there are only nine syncopated forms against *ca* forty unsyncopated ones. The change is interesting in view of the Herefordshire material in general: while syncopated forms in dental-stem verbs are frequent in the EME texts, they become much rarer in the later material, being mainly restricted to texts that clearly reflect southern origins (see p 344). Thus, while the changes made by the N translator might reflect regional variation, they might also, again, be taken to show his avoidance of archaic or literary forms.

Some of the most striking changes involve syntactic structure. On the most basic level, the translator regularizes poetic or alien element order; typically, postmodifying adjectives or genitive phrases are moved to precede the headword. The following changes seem to occur in no other manuscript of the same group:

V 71	X barnes bastardus	N bastardes barns
V 84	X penaunce discrete	N discrete penaunce

Similar regularizing changes include VI 311 *y nel nou3t lete* for X *leten y nelle*.

Certain constructions, which may be assumed to belong more typically to written than spoken language, are regularly rejected by the translator. In particular, he tends to rewrite all kinds of impersonal constructions. It is not certain whether he even recognizes *me* as the impersonal pronoun (OE *man*), or whether he simply reads it as *men*:

III 406	X me may	N men may
IV 121	X me fynt	N hy fynde
V 54	X me sholde	N men scholde

Similarly, impersonal constructions with an accusative/dative pronoun are rewritten as active ones:

P 189	X hym wratheth	N he wraþeþ
III 19	X where the leef licketh	N were þ" lef lykeþ

The use of indirect objects with dative force is likewise avoided by the translator, who tends to add a preposition or make some other change to the structure:

I 48	X þat Cesar byfalleth	N þat to Cesar befallas
II 202	X and consience tolde	N & to consience he told
IV 180	X reueth me my syhte	N ref me of my sy3t
VI 71	X tolde hit wille	N tolde it to wil

A tendency of particular interest, that seems to be stronger in some parts of the text than others, is the scribe's preference for constructions involving auxiliary verbs, instead of simple tenses:

P 110	X chastisid hem noght	N nold nou3t chasty hem
I 169	X thorlede	N gan þril
III 239	X that he ne felde nat	N þ' he my3t no3t afille
III 272	X they asken	N hy wille asken
III 275	X thei asken	N hy do asken

The last example is especially interesting, as it seems to indicate the use of periphrastic *do* in the spoken mode.

Some common tendencies may be discerned in all the syntactic changes listed above. Firstly, there is a tendency to regularize word order; secondly, inflected forms are avoided and, where possible, replaced with constructions that involve prepositions or auxiliaries. On the whole, the N translator's usage shows a development to a considerably more analytic language than that of Langland. The changes agree, in general, with the development towards present-day usage, and, compared with the general avoidance of archaism, might simply be seen as an attempt to update, or modernize, the language of the poem. However, such an interpretation is not sufficient in itself, especially considering those changes by the N translator that actually introduce more conservative forms (e.g. in the pronoun system; see p 111 above). A more plausible explanation would seem to be that the translator is converting the language into something more closely resembling a spoken idiom. It was shown above that a number of Langland's archaic forms - notably *forþy* and impersonal *me* - seem to have been unfamiliar to him, while others, like *she*, *they*, *ac* are clearly understood by him, but rejected, presumably as alien to his own usage. The syntactic changes seem to show similar patterns. The translator rewrites poetic or, it may be assumed, mainly literary constructions, whether he understands them fully or not; the uneven distribution of the changes of verbal construction noted above may be assumed to reflect an occasional tendency, in the course of the translation, to rewrite even quite simple and unmarked

structures (e.g. *thei asken*) into ones more natural to spoken usage. Whether as the result of conscious intentions or not, the changes result in a considerably less literary, and less structurally varied language. This regularizing tendency becomes even more clear when the lexical changes are considered.

Changes in lexis

The large-scale replacement of lexical items is probably the most striking aspect of the translation in N. While sporadic replacement of dialectally alien words is not uncommon in ME texts, consistent lexical translations are relatively rare.¹⁵ Such translations can provide valuable material for the study of word geography; so far, the only detailed study carried out is the analysis of the *Cursor Mundi* manuscripts by R. Kaiser (1937). Kaiser uses a simple division into *Nordwörter* and *Südwörter*, grouping his material according to etymological source, and using a variety of other ME texts with known geographical affiliations to reinforce and compare with the *Cursor Mundi* material. The replacement of northern lexical items with southern equivalents in MS Trinity R.3.8 of *Cursor Mundi* is largely paralleled by the N translator's treatment of the northern element of Langland's vocabulary, and Kaiser's work thus provides a very useful comparison; however, while the Trinity scribe usually strives to retain rhymes, the N translator shows no sign of recognizing the poetic device of alliteration in *Piers Plowman*.

Figure 18 (see pp 120-25) gives a full list of the lexical replacements by the N translator in the prologue and the first six passus. The list does not include closed-class words like pronouns or conjunctions, some of which were discussed in the previous section.

Northern words are generally replaced throughout. As such words usually occur in alliterative position, forming part of Langland's eclectic alliterative vocabulary (Kane 1981: 43-44), the substitutions involve, in most cases, the loss of alliteration. In the analysed section, few northern words are retained: only *bused* (III 15) and *frekes* (VI 152), both of which belong to Kaiser's list of *Nordwörter*, are left untranslated. Of the replaced words, the following are given in Kaiser's list:

barn ‘child’, *bykenne* ‘commend to’, *bruttene* ‘broken’, *cayren*, *kayres* ‘go’,
ferlyes ‘wonders’, *halsede* ‘greeted’, *marre* ‘mar’, *weye* ‘man’ (OE); *gart*
‘caused to’, *layn* ‘conceal’, *menske* ‘honour’ (vb) (ON); *lele* ‘loyal, true’ (OF)

Kaiser’s list includes only those words that he considers strictly limited to northern usage. However, the N translator also rejects a large number of Scandinavian-derived words not included in the list:

aloft, *bondemen* ‘peasants, serfs’, *calde* ‘called’, *gates*, *gyue* ‘give’, *grayth*
‘direct’ (aj), *kenne* ‘teach’, *kulde* ‘killed’, *kyrke* ‘church’, *lacke* ‘blame’ (vb),
layke ‘play’ (vb), *rotheth* ‘roots’ (vb), *seke* ‘seek’, *wayke* ‘weak’, *ylle* ‘ill’

The only Scandinavian loanword that seems to be fully part of the scribe’s usage is *take*, which he prefers to *nime*. Some of the words seem to have been comprehensible to the scribe, as he replaces them with the correct synonym, *e g barn* with *childe*, *calde* with *cleped*, *lele* with *trew* and *layke* with *playe*. He does not, however, seem to have been familiar with *cayren*, *gart*, *halsede*, *lacke*, *menske*, *marre* and *grayth*, which he either renders inappropriately or with apparent guesswork as *carien*, *gan*, *askede*, *spare lette apere*, *quethe*, *marye* and *gracioust gret*. Whether the translator’s replacement of *aloft* with *in heuene* and of *layn noght* with *tel me* reflects choice or guesswork is uncertain.

A very large number of words of French origin are also replaced; most of these would probably qualify as Skeat’s ‘hard words’ (see p 105 above):

acordaunce, *acuseth*, *adaunte*, *auer*, *auncel*, *blew* ‘blue’, *comseth*, *comesed*,
consenteth, *constorie*, *contreued*, *couent*, *debat*, *delycatly*, *desert*, *exitede*,
faileth, *faytest*, *feet* ‘feat’, *fortune*, *frele*, *glotonye*, *karke* ‘burden’ (vb), *labour*,
marchaunde, *mendenantes*, *mercyede*, *oste*, *penaunce*, *presumen*, *preyde*, *putrye*,
puyr, *restitue*, *ruyflares*, *sekte*, *sue sewe*, *syuile*, *yre*

In general, the translator seems to strive to replace these words with more familiar equivalents, usually native: so *bygynneþ* for *comseth*, *hap* for *fortune*, *brokel* for *frele*,

chaffare for *marchaunde*, *pankede* for *mercyede*, and, not unreasonably, *bost* for *adaunte*. In a few cases, he substitutes a preferred French loanword with synonymous meaning; so *dilatably* for *delycatly* and *trauayle* for *labour*. Most of the words seem, however, to be unfamiliar to him, to judge from his renditions, whether he substitutes a native word or another French one. So *faileth*, *faytest*, *karke* are rendered as *falleþ*, *fastest* and *carpe*, and *acuseth*, *couent*, *desert*, *exitede* as *consayleþ*, *couetyse*, *deseyt* and *excuced*. The common verb *sue sewe* ‘follow, sue’ seems to have been quite unfamiliar to him, and he renders it variously as *schewe*, *sheweþ*, *dude*, *kepeþ*, each time making nonsense of the meaning.

The N translator appears, in general, to prefer guesswork to the retention of an alien word. Apart from loanwords, this is also seen in his replacement of a large number of words of native origin, many of which form, again, part of Langland’s alliterative vocabulary, and might be assumed to be archaic or poetic in the LME period:

amansed, *arwed*, *beygh* (pl *beyus*), *buryn*, *buyrde*, *can* ‘knows’, *cheste*, *derne*, *elde*, *fore*, *glemans*, *gomus*, *hente*, *hewes*, *kuth*, *lacche* (pa *lauhte*), *lene*, *lomes*, *lysse*, *lythe* ‘listen’, *molde*, *nyme*, *rauhte*, *schathe*, *segges*, *sothliche*, *spene*, *myspened*, *syuile*, *tofte*, *vnlose*, *vrete*, *warth* ‘became’, *wete/wyte* ‘know’, *whicche* ‘chest’, *wilnen*, *witte*, *wroth* ‘turned’

In most cases, the translator simply substitutes a more familiar term for such words: so *mayde* for *buyrde*, *gromes* for *gomus* and *þe contre* for *alle his segges*. The native *derne* is replaced with *prine*, and both *nyme* and *lacche* are replaced with *take*. Mistakes include *jinves* ‘Jews’ for *hewes* ‘workers’ (I 123), later more correctly rendered *hynes* (IV 102). Also, misunderstanding the specialist word *gommes* ‘gums’ for the archaic *gomes* ‘men’, the scribe renders it *gromes* (II 236). The semantic field of knowledge causes particular problems. The form *can*, used with its OE force, is correctly replaced with ‘knowe’; the translator does not, however, seem to understand *wete* ‘know’ (IV 100). Similarly, he clearly does not understand *kuth* in the phrase *kyng of þat kuth* ‘king of that kith/land’, which, assuming that *kuth* stands for *couth* ‘known’, he renders *kyng of þ' y knowe* (III 260).

It will be clear from the above examples that the translation of lexis, like that of morphology and syntax, is thorough, and not always successful. The translator's range of vocabulary was clearly different from, and considerably more limited than, Langland's: although no count is made here, the translation must reduce considerably the overall range of vocabulary in the poem. He rejects a very wide range of words, including dialectally exotic, learned, specialized, archaic and poetic ones, whether, it seems, familiar to him or not, and substitutes a much more restricted vocabulary.

The changes in lexis and grammar are clearly part of a single process, not unlike, it seems, the preparation of a modern 'easy-reading' version of a book: unfamiliar and poetic features, whether archaic or innovative, are removed, and the language is simplified and regularized. The changes largely destroy the literary qualities of the text; from the point of view of language study, however, they would seem to provide an invaluable source of information. The direction of change seems to be towards a more idiomatic language, close to the spoken variety and with few concessions to traditional orthography. As the translation involves all levels of language, including syntactic structures, and as the text of *Piers Plowman* provides a large amount of linguistically varied material, the text would seem to be of great potential value for ME language study.

A few inferences about the external context of the translation may be made. The large and decorative manuscript, which impressed Skeat, suggests that the translation might have been produced for a patron of some wealth, rather than as a purely private enterprise. The poem would presumably have been intended for the use of people with restricted book-learning; the lexical changes made by the scribe are indicative not only of his own limitations, but of his views of the limitations of the intended audience. Further, the poem would be read for its contents rather than for its poetic qualities: as noted above, ease of comprehension constantly overrides poetic style in the translator's work, and it is uncertain to what extent he was even aware of the alliterative form.

Some details might hint at a Lollard connection: most notably, the seemingly arbitrary change of both *bondemen* and *mendenantes* to *pore men* (P 220, V 76) might recall the term 'poor man' used by the Lollards as a code-word for themselves (see Hudson 1981: 20-21), and the change from *to shryfte* to *to chirche* (VI 349) might

reflect Lollard attitudes. As Lollardy was particularly widespread in Herefordshire in the late fourteenth century (see p 163), and as *Piers Plowman* seems to have been popular with the movement, there is a plausible, if by no means conclusive, historical context for such a connection.

The exact historical context is, however, largely irrelevant for the present purpose. The main conclusion to be drawn from the above is that the N text must be considered an unusually good source of linguistic data, providing information both of the active choices of the translator, and of the wide range of forms that he rejects. A detailed study of the latter would be of particular interest for the generally obscure question of the gap between ME literary and colloquial usage.

Figure 18: Replacement of lexical items by the translator of the N-text of the Piers Plowman C-version (LP 7320). Loss of alliteration caused by the changes has been indicated with 'y'.

Line	MS X (and K, S if different)	N	Loss of alliteration
<u>Prologue</u>			
31	cayren	carien	
44	gomus	gromes	
48	seke	seche	
63	ferlyes	pereyles	y
87	tylie	schewe	
88	lele	trewe	
96	sondrye	dyuerse	y
105	cheste	sorowe	y
124	schrewed	luper	
135	presumen	hauep	

144	contreued	by-gan	
146	lele	trewe	y
162	vnlose	openy	y
172	cloches	clowys	
178	beyus	bedys	
180	on here beygh	þerbye	
187	layke	playe	y
195	labour	trauayle	y
199	ykyld	slawe	y
217	meteles	metyng	
220	bondemen	pore men	y

Passus I

4	calde	cleped	
12	tofte	toppe	
17	hette	made	y
21	thenke	þenche	
29	glotonye	dronkkehede	y
42	molde	worlde	y
78	kenne	teche	y
85	wilneth	willen	
	ylle	grefe	
88	kenne	teche	y
100	lacche	take	y
115	lacky	spare	y
121	wyteth	knoweþ	
123	hewes	Juwes	y
136	kenne	teche	y
139	leue	wene	y
159	comseth	bygynneþ	y
177	leeliche	trewly	y
	lene	3yue to	y
181	feet	fayþe	
196	vnloseth	vnloukeþ	
199	lysse	rest	y
199	grapest way	gracioust way	

Passus II

3	barn	childe	y
4	kenne	teche	y
5	loo	se	y
18	layn noght yf	tel me yf	y
26	souche	trowede	y

34	foleweth	fulfilleþ	
41	a-mansed	a-cursed	y
49	lacke	lette	
51	by-kenne	bytake	y
55	rotheth	setteþ	y
63 <i>etc</i>	syuile	gile	y
76	lelly	truly	y
88	enuye and yre	aneuy & care	y
90	consenteth	graunteþ	y
101	spene	spende	
102	sue forth	schewe forþ	
118	worche	make	y
132	gates	3ates	
139	nymeth	takeþ	y
	gynneth	makeþ	
172	alle his segges	þe contre	y
193	fobbes	robbers	y
226	tologged	for lakyng	
236	gommes 'gums'	gromes	
251	treuliche	souply	y

Passus III

3	can	knowe	
5	sothliche	sotellyche	
14	somme	many on	
15	buyrde	mayde	y
21	mercyede	þankede	y
26	lauhte	take	y
34	constorie	contrey	
58	lacketh nat	lacheþ now	
64	kyrke	chyrche	y
81	þe mene peple	þe comen p.	y
125	blew aysches	plake askes	
142	wantowen	wikkede	
157	frele	brokel	y
188	barnes	chyldren	y
219	acuseth	consayleþ	y
229	menske	quethe	y
232	kulde	gilte	y
236	arwed	agast	
237	bruttene K kruten	berst	
251	his oste	hys men	y
260	kyng of þat kuth	kyng of þ' y knowe	
291	desert	deseyt	
	derne	priue	y

309	leely	truly	y
317	lele	truwe	y
325	sewed	dude	y
336	acordaunce	a concordau <u>n</u> se	
338	lele	truwe	
347	leel	trewe	y
349	faileth	falleþ	
352	seketh and seweth	sekeþ & sheweþ	y
359	kenneth	techeþ	y
366	name KS surname	N <u>ser</u> uant	
383	wilnen	willen	
401	kald	cleped	
402	nyme	nemne	
440	adaunte	bost	y
468	karke	carpe	

Passus IV

24	comesed to pryke	forþ he gan <u>p</u> rike	
41	kennede	bade	
58	hewes	hyne	
62	me and myne	me & myne hyne	
75	schathe	schape	
100	wete	wite	
102	hewes	hynes	
111	whicche	huche	
125	ruyflares	robbers	
147	kyndelyche	fyndelyche	
158	wilneth	wyle	
171	rykene	regne	
175	lele	trwe men	y
178	lede	holde	y
179	rauhte	hong	y

Passus V

9	dede	werke	y
23	wayke	feble	y
30	faytest	fastest	
45	lomes	lymes	
69	spene	despende	
73	rentes	londe	

76	mendenantes	poure men	y
93	myspeneð	dispendeð	
98	warth	happed	y
103	leele	hele	y
104	kyrke	cherche	y
105	kyrke	cherche	
107	sy3ing	sikyng	
119	segges	maken	y
128	preyde	bad	y
134	Jakke	Butte	y
145	stewed	scused	
146	gart wryte	gan it write	
200	sueth	kepeþ	y

Passus VI

8	hente	take	y
14	penaunce	repentaunse	y
20	exitede	excuced	
32	me wilnyng	my willyng	
	auer	a vouR	
34	bolde othes	fals opes	y
37	pop-holy	pomp-holy	
38	sekte	sute	
39	couent	couetyse	
62	gyue	3yue	y
66	wroth his fust	wrong...	
	wesches	wissing	
74	vrete	erred	y
87	euył	luþer	y
97	lakke	apeR	y
103	whyte eyes	blerye ey3en	y
104	niuiylng	snyvylyng	y
	nippyng	wypyng	y
105	weye	wy3t	
113	witte	wote	
118	my fore	me by-fore	
123	at debat	at þe bate	
127	my fortune	myn hap	
131	mony monthes	many 3eR	y
158	luste	wil	y
166	delycatly	dilatably	
172	puyr mercy	grete mercy	y
186	putrie	petrye	
187	kyssyng	cursyng	
189	sotiled songes	sotellyche sentep	

192	louelokest	fayreste	y
194	lythe	ly3e	
200	elde	colde	y
205	walch	velte	y
	thredbare	dr̥edbaR	
210	weye	wrye	
215	lere	lerne	
224	myn auncel	any o <u>p</u> er	
229	bommode	wold	y
230	grayth mesure	gret m.	
241	lernede	lerede	
247	buryn	bern	
258	weyhtes	wittes	
277	leuede	wente	y
280	marchaunde	chaffare	y
303	to mene	to mede	
317	saide	cryede	y
343	restitue	3elde	
346	the hey dome	þe day of dome	y
349	shryfte	chirche	
350	kyrkeward	chirche-worde	y
351	kayres	kareþ	
359	fenkelsede	fynelsede	
395	ymbywhile	romby lowe?	
397	grydy	grounyng	
399	ruet	ryvet	
403	glemans	gam-mannes	
419	bolle	coppe	
423	aloft	in heuene	y
435	gode god	blessed god	y

7330 Oxford, Bodleian Library Digby 171, fols 3-62; s xiv ex (*LALME* 7330)

The manuscript consists of 60 folios, and contains an imperfect version of the C-text of *Piers Plowman*. The text is the work of a single scribe, writing a clear and regular anglicana formata. The first part of the text is annotated in an italic hand, and an introduction and a piece of verse at the end are added by 'S. B. Minister', identified by Skeat (1873: xlv) as 'Stephen Batman, once a member of Trinity College, Cambridge'. There is also a record of the purchase of the manuscript in 1578 'of harvy in gras street'.

The text is imperfect both at the beginning and the end. It begins at line 217 of passus ii ('Drede stod atte dore and þat deone herde') and ends at line 65 of passus xv ('For a doctor at þe heie deys drank wyn faste'); there are no textual gaps within.

Following Skeat, the text is denoted by the siglum K. The present analysis is based on a microfilm and covers the entire text, with the exception of the last three folios which are largely illegible.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the dialect of 7330 was localized somewhat to the north of the other two *Piers Plowman* texts, corresponding on the geographical map to the Wye Valley, about halfway between the city of Hereford and the town of Ross-on-Wye. As with 7301/2, the analysis was based on a very small sample, consisting of the first three quires (fols 3-26). Samuels (1985 [1988]: 76, 83 n 46) gives the following forms as distinctive for the present text:

meny mony 'many', *fram* 'from', *ny* 'nor', *3ut* 'yet', *hure huiren* 'hear', *eolde* 'age', *fuld* 'felled'

The last two forms are not included in the present questionnaire. The forms *fram* and *ny* occur as a very minor variants only, and mainly towards the beginning; they should,

accordingly, not be used as primary evidence for the localization. Many more regularly occurring forms can, however, be added to the list, which may then be compiled as follows:

vche eche ‘each’, *whuche* ‘which’, *moche muche mochel muchel* ‘much’, *mony meny* ‘many’, *bote* ‘but’, *pau3* ‘though’, *ar* ‘ere’, *3ut* ‘yet’, *a3eynes a3eyn* ‘against’, *po* ‘then’, *deide died* ‘died’, *hur* ‘hear’, *ponk-* ‘thank’, *dradde* ‘dreaded’, *pruyde* ‘pride’, *fuyr* ‘fire’, *furst* ‘first’, *dude* ‘did’, *vuel* ‘evil’, *scheo heo* ‘she’, *hure* ‘her’, *pr pl -en*, *ert* ‘art’, *beon aren* ‘are’, *han* ‘have’

The text also contains numerous occurrences of <o> spellings in words like *mon* ‘man’, *constou* ‘canst thou’ and *nomeliche* ‘namely’; while these occur as minor variants only, their combined frequency makes them significant enough to be taken into account. The forms *moche muche*, *mony* and *scheo heo*, as well as the <u> and <uy> spellings in words like *pruyde*, *fuyr*, *dude* and *hure*, suggest in general terms the South and West, while the *mon* type and the present plural verb forms exclude the southern counties. The forms *whuche*, *bote*, *3ut*, *po*, *hur* and *dradde* exclude the northern part of the West Midland area, leaving a core area of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with the adjoining parts of the surrounding counties. Within this area, a precise localization is provided by the distributions of *vche*, *meny*, *bote*, *pau3* and *han*, which together delimit the most likely localization to what roughly corresponds to the Woolhope area. The localization is illustrated in Figure 19, using the distributions of *vche*, *meny* and *pau3*.

The linguistic usage is fairly consistent. Most items show one clearly dominant form; variation tends to be restricted to forms that commonly co-occur in the area, and remains constant throughout the text. Examples include *if* ~ *3if* ‘if’, *pou3* ~ *pau3* ‘though’, *a3eynes* ~ *a3eyn* ‘against’ and *beon* ~ *aren* ‘are’. The text also shows variation between <eo> and <e> in words like ‘be’, ‘see’, as well as some unremarkable fluctuation between functionally equivalent W-features, e.g. *bope* ~ *bothe* ‘both’, *vs* ~ *ous* ‘us’, *3e* ~ *3ee* ‘ye’. All regularly occurring forms fit within the localized area.

A few changes take place within the text. These involve mainly S-features, and are summarized below.

Figure 19

Localization of LP 7330



EACH	vche	>	eche vche
FROM	fro (fram)	>	fro
OR	or ((oþer))	>	or
NOT	not	>	nat
SHE	scheo ((sche 3heo s3heo))	>	heo ((scheo))
HER	hure ((hire))	>	hure here ((heore))
THEY	þei ((hy hie))	>	þei

The changes do not coincide at any definite point, and are for the most part partial rather than absolute. Their gradual character suggests some kind of drift or transfer usage. Several of the variants that occur only in the early part are clearly southern in character (*fram*, *3heo*, *hire*, *hy hij hie* and, to some extent, *oþer*); of these, especially *fram*, *3heo* and *hy* may be assumed to have been marginal in the area where the text was localized.

Whether their disappearance reflects a drift towards the scribe's own preferred usage or away from it cannot be deduced; however, as they are abandoned relatively quickly, they should be excluded as evidence.

A number of minor variants look like stray northernisms.¹⁶ These include present 2 and 3 sg *-es*, *lhawand* 'laughing', *halde* 'hold', *amange* 'among' and *mou3hte* 'might'. The 2 and 3 sg forms in *-es* occur commonly as minor variants in southern texts of the fifteenth century, and are not particularly remarkable (see pp 238-39); some of the others are less easy to interpret, and may either reflect a northern element or genuine local variation. For the most part, these minor variants may simply be ignored as evidence; however, the initial <lh> in *lhawand* requires some consideration.

The text contains altogether six examples of initial <lh>, of which five occur in words where the *h* is historically correct: so *lhene* (OE *hlæne*, 3 times), *lheberes* (OE *hleaperas*) and *lhawand* (OE *hliehhende*). It appears once unhistorically in *lhened* 'remained' (OE *læfan*). The significance of these spellings is difficult to assess. According to Jordan (1968: 175), the initial *h* in *hl*, *hm* and *hr* had in general disappeared already by 1000, although it still occurs in the *Ayenbite of Inwit* (1340). Angelika Lutz (1991: 29 ff) gives a less rigid dating: according to her, *h* begins to disappear in all

dialects from the eleventh century on (earlier in Northumbrian) and has generally been lost by the late thirteenth century, the last <lh> *etc* spellings appearing in Kent in the fourteenth century.¹⁷

The examples in *MED* show <lh> mainly in texts dated before the mid-thirteenth century; even of these, most are either copies of Old English texts or texts with southeastern connections. The only later texts with regular <lh> seem to be the *Ayenbite of Inwit* and the thirteenth-century southeastern poem *Sumer is icumen in*.¹⁸ No such spellings occur in the early SWML material, where the loss appears to have been early: it has already taken place in the earliest ME text localizable in the Herefordshire area, MS Lambeth Palace 487, dated *ca* 1200 (see pp 258, 275).

Whatever the explanation of the <lh> spellings, they cannot represent a living feature of Herefordshire usage. The scribe's frequent unhistorical use of <wh> indicates that he did not differentiate between *wh* and *w*, a distinction that in general seems to have survived several centuries longer than that between *hl* and *l* (Jordan 1968: 175; Lutz 1991: 46-47, 69). There are also other indications that the scribe attempts to produce conventional or archaistic spellings. The frequent use of the digraph <eo> is the most obvious example; while it is generally used in a historically correct way, it is occasionally extended to words like *heo* 'he' and *3eo* 'ye'. Similarly, there are examples of unhistorical extension of the stem-final *i* of Class II weak verbs into 3 sg present forms, e.g. *wonyep* 'dwells'. These spellings suggest considerable differences between the spelling system that the scribe aims to produce, and his own spoken system. The <lh> spellings may be explained in such terms, whatever the background of their availability for selection by the scribe.

As far as regularly used forms are concerned, the K text would seem to provide good evidence for the present study. The language is strongly regional and may be localized precisely; no regularly occurring forms disagree with the localization. It does, however, contain a number of minor variants that are unparalleled in the area, and certain conservative features that can have had no counterpart in the scribe's spoken language. Such forms should not be relied on as evidence, and the usage as a whole may be assumed to involve a considerable degree of archaism.

4.2.5 *Titus and Vespasian*: LPs 7351, 7352 and 7353

7351/2/3 Oxford, Bodleian Library Douce 78, fols 1-75; s xv 3/4 (LALME 7350)

The manuscript consists of 76 folios, and contains a collection of verse and medical recipes; the major part consists of an incomplete version of *Titus and Vespasian*, also known as *The Vengeance of God's Death* and *The Siege or Battle of Jerusalem*. The contents are listed as follows:

- 1) fols 1r - 1v: '3utte y se but fewe canne sece...' (acephalous)
- 2) fols 1v - 3r: 'In a tabernacle of a towre...' (*Quia amore langueo*)
- 3) fols 3r - 5r: 'As reson rywlyde my rechyles mynde...' (*Filius regis mortuus est*)
- 4) fols 5r - 7v: 'This is crystis owne complaynte...'
- 5) fols 7v - 17v: Medical recipes, beg. 'to put away a steche in whatte place þ' eue^r he be w^t oute doute'
- 6) fols 18r - 18v: 'O þu pereles prynce of peese...' (incomplete)
- 7) fols 19r - 75v: 'Lysteneth all þ' bethe a lyve...' (*Titus and Vespasian*, incomplete)

The manuscript would seem to contain the work of three scribes, the first one (A) responsible for fols 1-18, the second (B) for fols 19-62 and 71, and the third (C) for fols 63-70 and 72-75. All produce a secretary hand with some anglicana features; the hands look fairly similar, but show regular differences in letter form (e.g. **d**, **y**, **w**). The first eighteen folios contain no catchwords or other collative devices, and at least one folio is missing between fols 17 and 18. The poem on fol 18, which ends the stretch copied by A and precedes *Titus and Vespasian*, is incomplete.

The text of *Titus and Vespasian* is contained on six quires. The 2390 lines represent about half the length of the entire poem as contained in other manuscripts, and several quires must have been lost, if the poem was copied out in full. It was clearly

produced by some kind of *pecia* system, with scribe B responsible for quires 1-4 and scribe C for quires 5-6. The quires seem to have been meant to consist of six or four folded sheets each, and catchwords and signatures were employed throughout. The quires are marked in the sequence *f, a, b, c, d, e*; the quire marked *d* has been changed from original *g*. The first three quires consist of six folded sheets each, while the fourth has four sheets only; gaps in the text suggest that a whole quire may be missing between the third and the fourth, and that the text for copying was here calculated for six rather than four sheets. The text, copied by B, becomes very condensed towards the end of fol 62v, and a portion is missing between this and the fifth quire, copied by C. This portion is inserted later, in the hand of B, on fol 71. The fifth quire consists of four sheets, followed by the inserted text and a final, incomplete, continuation of the poem.

The displacements and gaps seem to have arisen as a result of two scribes working on portions of the same text, and failing to match the parts. The change from signature *g* to *d* suggests that the two scribes may have followed different plans, calculating the text for six- and four-sheet quires respectively. The first eighteen folios may or may not have originally been intended to be bound together with *Titus and Vespasian*; the similarity both in graphetic and linguistic character between the work of A and that of B and C suggests, in any case, a shared background.

The poems have neither titles or descriptive colophons. All except item 1 occur in other manuscripts, but no versions seem to be particularly closely related to the present text. Item 2 (*Quia amore langueo*) is in one manuscript ascribed to John Lydgate; the ascription has not, however, been credited (Pearsall 1970: 78).

Titus and Vespasian represents a version of a popular romance, which survives in English in three forms: the present version, in rhyming couplets, survives in eleven MSS, while eight MSS survive of a shorter alliterative version, *The siege of Jerusalem*, and there is a single text of a prose version. *Titus and Vespasian* was probably composed in the late fourteenth century. The earliest manuscripts of it date from around 1400; the present one, from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, is one of the latest.

The texts contained in the manuscript are analysed in their entirety, with the stretches copied by the three scribes treated separately; the analysis is based on a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library.

Analysis

LP 7350 is localized in *LALME* in the southern part of central Herefordshire; there is no mention of the manuscript containing the work of more than one scribe. However, as the manuscript seems to be the work of three scribes, their individual usages should first be compared before localization is attempted.

The three scribal stretches show some regular differences in orthography, including both W- and S-features. The former are relatively clear-cut. For example, only A uses regularly <y> in 'ye', 'you' 'your', while the others mainly use yogh; similarly, only C frequently shows spellings with doubled vowels (e g *bee* 'be', *freende* 'friend', *schee* 'she'). C is also the only one to begin lines with capitals, and, in his stretch, initial <Th> rather than thorn appears regularly in this position.

The differences in S-features, on the other hand, seem to involve selections from a common set of forms rather than absolute changes (see Figure 20). The greatest differences are between A and C, while the usage of B seems to contain features found in both. This might suggest a transfer from one set of forms to another within B; however, the forms seem, on the whole, to occur in random variation throughout B, with little indication of any particular direction of change.

The differences do not seem to involve geographically incompatible forms. As the usages are, on the whole, closely similar, a localization of the forms shared by all of them may be attempted. The following distinctive forms occur more or less regularly in the usage of all three scribes:

wheche 'which', *eny* 'any', *too* 'two', *3if* 'if', *sethe* 'since', *þaw(e* 'though', *or* 'ere', *nor* 'nor', *a3en* 'again', *a3enste* 'against', *þo* 'then', *sawe say* 'saw', *onsware -swere* 'answer', *aftur* 'after', *hed* 'had', *wes* 'was', *fadur* 'father', *ded(-* 'did', cp adjectives in *-ur*, *ham* 'them', *byn* 'are', *schall schull* 'shall' (pl), *schuld(-* 'should'

Item	LP 7351 (A)	LP 7352 (B)	LP 7353 (C)
MUCH	moche	moche mochell	mochell 1
THROUGH	þrowe 1	þro3 (þrowe þrow3e)	þrow3 2 thro3 2
BUT	but	bote (but)	bote
IF	if ((yf 3if))	3if (if))	3if
THOUGH	þawe þow(3)e	þawe ((þowe þaw3e þow3e))	thaw3 1 þaw 1
ERE	or	or ((ar))	or (ar)
NOT	not ((no3t))	not (no3t no3te)	no3t(e)
YET	3ut 1 3utte 1	3itte (3it) ((3utte))	3it 2 3ytte 1
AGAIN	agayn a3en(ne	a3en	a3en
HER	huR	huR 8	heR ((here))
ARE	byn ((be ar))	byn ((bethe beth))	bethe (byn) ((be))

Figure 20: Differences in linguistic usage between scribes A, B and C (LPs 7351, 7352 and 7353).

Of these, the forms *wheche*, *eny*, *aftur* and *fadur* suggest a non-central, most probably western or southern area. The forms *onswere*, *hed* and *wes* suggest the West Midland area, excluding SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire. A northern limit is provided by a number of forms, including *þo*, *ded-* and, most southerly, *ham*; the latter form excludes the northern parts of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and, together with *hed* and *wes*, limits the area to the southeastern quarter of Herefordshire, a small adjoining part of Worcestershire and a part of NW Gloucestershire. Finally, the

forms *schuld(e)* and *þaw(e)* exclude the latter area, as well as the extreme south of Herefordshire, leaving a fairly limited area in the eastern part of central Herefordshire, as well as a small part of the extreme west of Worcestershire. This is illustrated in Figure 21, using the distributions of *þaw(e)*, *wes* and *ham*.

Virtually all forms shared by the scribes agree with this localization. An exception is *nor*, which occurs as a regular form in only one other Herefordshire text; this text, LP 7510, is relatively late, and contains an element of EML usage (see pp 218-19, 222). The regular use of *nor* in the present text probably reflects its late date and the beginning influence of standardization.

The individual usages of all three scribes also seem to agree with the localization of the shared forms. The usage of A is relatively varied, and suggests that the individual texts in this part may have been copied from exemplars in different dialects. Forms exclusive to A include *neþer* ‘neither’, *fort* ‘until’, *agayn* ‘again’, *agenste* ‘against’, *hens* ‘hence’, *hoo* ‘who’, *yes* ‘eyes’, *streynthe* ‘strength’, *brann-* ‘burn’, *won(ne)* ‘one’ and *ar* ‘are’. The forms *fort*, *streynthe*, *brann* and *won(ne)*, together with a number of forms shared with B, including *þrowe* ‘through’, *3utte* ‘yet’ and *furste* ‘first’, suggest that the individual usage of the A scribe should be localized roughly in the same area as the shared forms. A few forms seem untypical for Herefordshire, notably *neþer*, *agayn*, *yes* and *ar*; these occur mainly in the medical recipes.¹⁹ As a relatively short text, A may not be fully reliable as evidence; however, as the scribe’s usage in the main remains regular throughout, and agrees well with the localization suggested in Figure 21, the text may be used with caution, excluding forms that are restricted to individual literary texts.

The B stretch contains a number of distinctive forms not found in A or C; however, virtually all occur as minor variants only. These include *meche mekyll* ‘much’, *oper* ‘or’, *hedur* ‘hither’, *hennys* ‘hence’, *whennys* ‘whence’, *mon* ‘man’, *con* ‘can’, *nome* ‘name’, *þonke* ‘thank’, *3ete* ‘ate’, *wesse* ‘was’, *drad dred* ‘dreaded’, *kyende* ‘kind’, *hilde* ‘held’, *þer* ‘their’, *þam þem* ‘them’. Of these, only *hilde* may be considered a regularly occurring form. Its distribution is concentrated further south, and would exclude the northern part of the area suggested in Figure 21. Some of the minor variants, notably *mekyll* and, possibly, *dred* suggest a more northern colouring, and may be considered relicts, as may *þer* and *þam þem*.

Figure 21

Localization of shared forms
in LP 7351/2/3 (scribes A,
B and C)

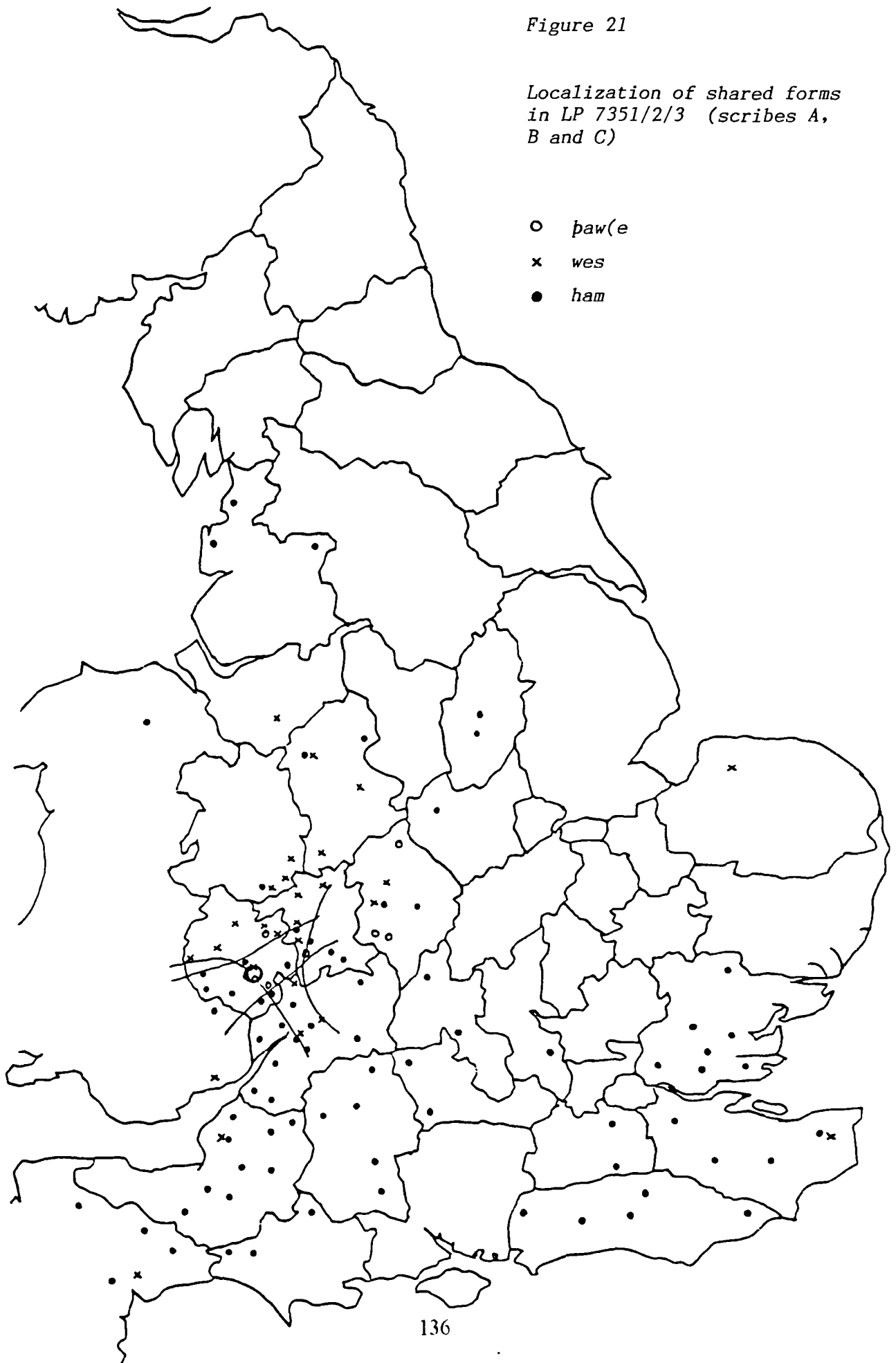


Figure 22 Localization of shared forms in 7352
and 7353 (scribes B and C)

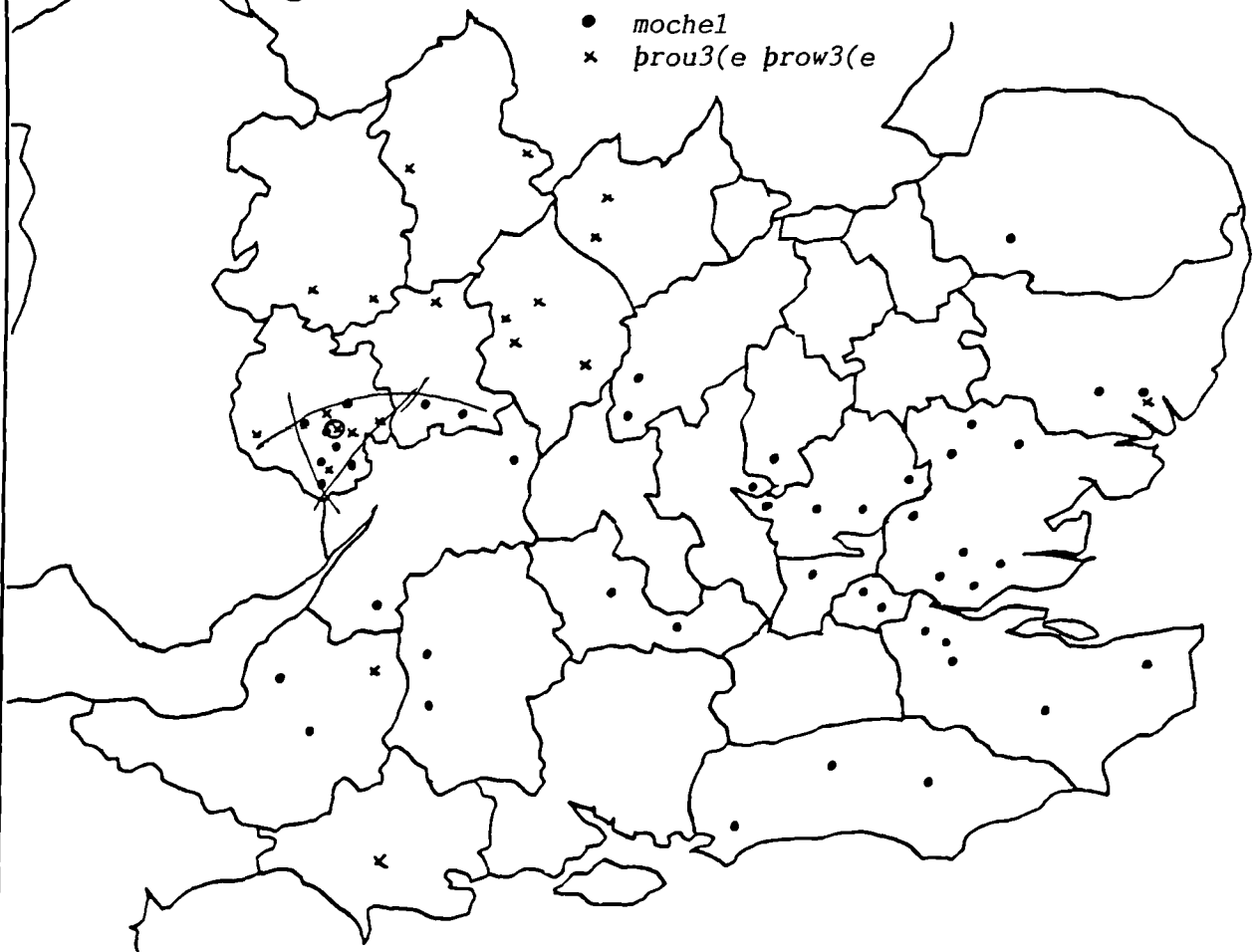
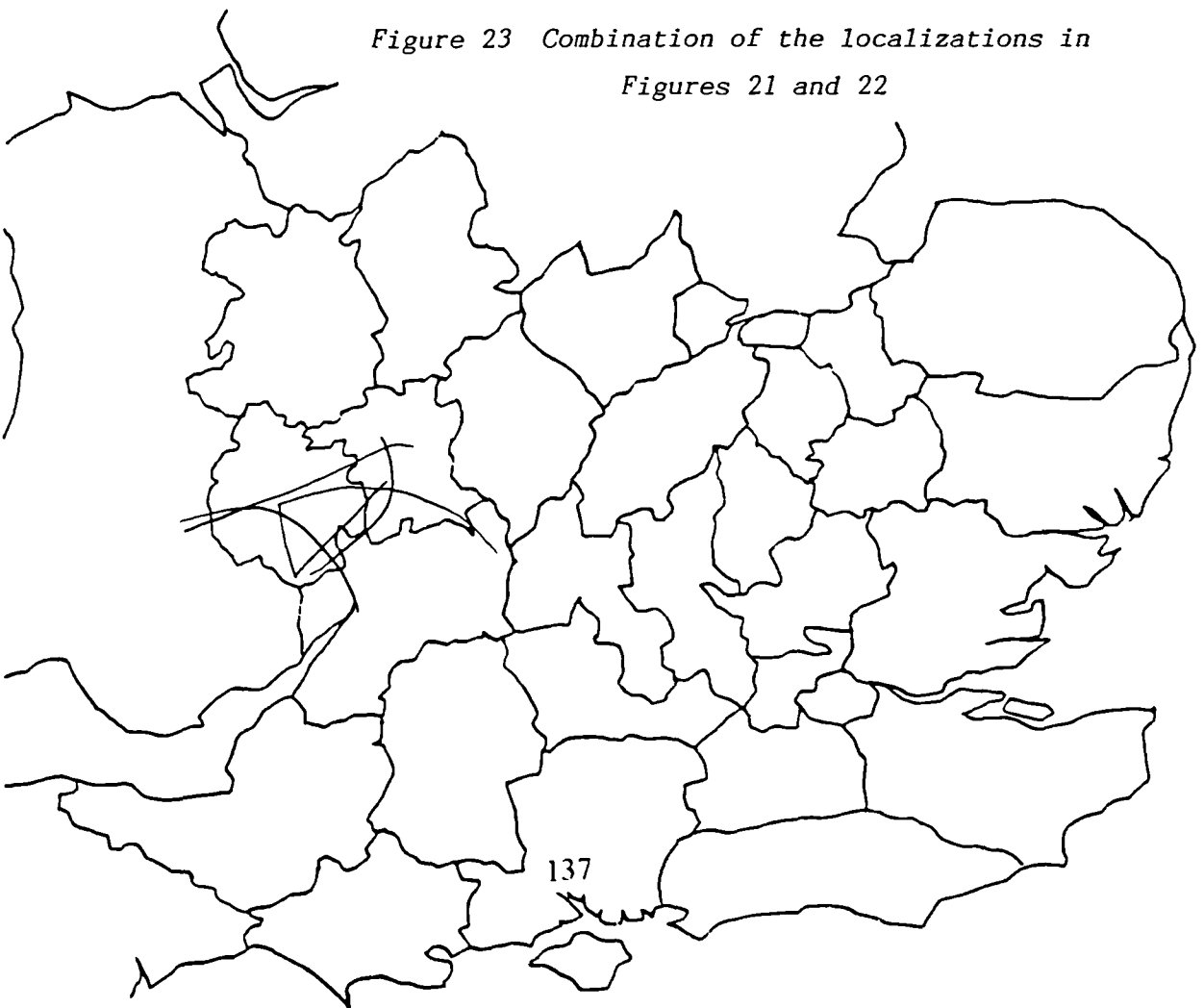


Figure 23 Combination of the localizations in
Figures 21 and 22



Apart from the purely orthographic differences noted above, the usage of C contains few distinctive forms not also found in B; as Figure 20 shows, the only clear-cut differences in S-features between the two stretches are the use of *heR* ‘her’ in C as against *huR* in A and B, and the preference for *bethe* rather than *byn* ‘are’. However, the two stretches share a number of distinctive forms that do not occur in A. It was suggested above that the three texts seem to contain two separate sets of forms, shared by AB and BC respectively; this may be illustrated with the following examples:

A and B	B and C
moche	mochell
but	bote
if	3if
not	no3t
byn	bethe

For the most part, the forms in the two latter parts are more strongly dialectally coloured than those shared with A. It is probable that these differences, at least in part, reflect underlying differences in the exemplar(s) of the scribes; however, the exact relationship between the usages is uncertain, and the selection of forms in each individual text must be assumed to reflect the constraints of its scribe. It may, however, be noted that only the usage of A suggests that the text was copied from exemplars containing some element of clearly different dialects; in the case of B and C, it is likely that the shared set of forms reflects an exemplar in a dialect not far removed from the present one.

It might, then, be of interest to attempt a localization of the shared usage of B and C. As Figure 22 shows, the forms *mochel(l)* and *prow3e*, which have the narrowest distributions, together delimit the area to a part of central and southern Herefordshire. Combining this with the localization for the usage shared by all texts, the usage of scribes B and C may be localized fairly precisely in the eastern part of central Herefordshire (see Figure 23). Few forms in the entire manuscript are incompatible with this localization.

The similarities between the three usages suggest a very close relationship. The combination of shared, regularly used forms is largely idiosyncratic, including dialectal forms like *hed*, *wes* combined with the rare form *byn* ‘are’ and the non-Herefordshire form *nor*. While the similarities between B and C are easily explicable, as the two stretches belong to the same literary text, no such obvious relationship exists between A and B. It is not unlikely that the exemplar(s) from which the text was copied contained the usage of a single scribe, itself with some internal changes of usage, which all three scribes modified slightly according to their individual constraints. The dialectal coherence of the respective selections suggests, in any case, that all scribes belonged, more or less, to the same area.

As the overall usage is relatively consistent, and most regularly used forms may be fitted into a limited area, it would be of little purpose in the present study to distinguish strictly between the scribal texts. They may, accordingly, be considered to reflect essentially the same dialectal usage, and can thus be mapped together; the linguistic profiles are, however, given separately in Appendix 2. Forms that occur in A only should be used with some caution, and obvious relicts, like *yes* ‘eyes’ should be discarded as evidence. Similarly, forms like *nor*, which seem to reflect standardizing tendencies rather than local usage, should not be used as evidence for the latter. The late date of the manuscript should, on the whole, be taken into account. Otherwise, the text should provide good evidence.

4.2.6 The Prose *Brut*: LPS 7370, 7420, 7481 and 7482

The *LALME* material for Herefordshire includes three manuscripts of the Prose *Brut*, used as the basis for LPs 7370, 7420 and 7481 respectively. The texts are not closely related, and contain different combinations of the various versions and continuations of the *Brut*.

The Prose *Brut* was the most popular secular English text in the Middle Ages, surviving in more than 170 manuscripts. The earliest, including the main part of Rawlinson B 171 (LP 7370), date from about 1400; the text continued to be copied throughout the fifteenth century. The earliest English version, which ends in 1333, was translated from an Anglo-Norman *Brut* based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The translation was thought by Brie (1905: 54) to originate in the East Midlands at a date between 1350 and 1380; later, Matheson (1984: 210) has suggested a date about 1400, and Herefordshire as the place of origin. Most manuscripts include continuations after 1333. The first continuation ends in 1377, and is included in all three Herefordshire manuscripts. The second continuation runs from 1377 to 1419; it is included in Cambridge Kk.I.12 (LP 7420) and, imperfectly, in Rawlinson B 173 (LP 7481/2). Various further continuations carry the text to and beyond the 1460s. The text in Rawlinson B 173, classified by Matheson (1977: 202) as a 'peculiar version', ends in the year 1431.

A two-volume edition of the Prose *Brut*, edited by Brie, appeared in 1906-1908. The first volume contains the entire Common Version text as found in Rawlinson B 171; the second volume contains a sequence of continuations, with selections from 21 other manuscripts, including CUL Kk.I.12 and Rawlinson B 173. In more recent times, work on the Prose *Brut*, including a new classification of the manuscripts, has been carried out by Matheson (1977, 1984).

**7370 Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson B 171, fols 1-171; s xiv/xv (*LALME*
7370)**

The manuscript consists of 201 folios, and contains the Prose *Brut*. It is the work of two scribes; the text copied by the first scribe, on fols 1-171, contains the so-called Common Version up to 1333, and forms the basis of LP 7370. The remainder is written in a different hand and contains the First Continuation up to 1377. The text is incomplete at the beginning.

The text by the first scribe has been dated to about 1400, and belongs to a group of eight texts that represent the earliest textual stage of the *Brut* (Matheson 1977: 30). The present analysis is based on the 1906 edition by Brie, which reproduces orthographic detail very carefully. The analysis covers eighty pages of the edition, pp 20-39, 90-109, 170-189 and 250-269; this corresponds roughly to fols 5r-16r, 46v-58v, 95v-107v and 146v-159v in the manuscript. The sections make up *ca* 52 fols, which amounts to *ca* 30 % of the entire text.

Analysis

The text was localized in *LALME* in western Herefordshire, in what seems to correspond roughly to the region of Ewyas or the Golden Valley on the geographical map. The following forms may be used for localization:

soche 'such', *miche michel* 'much', *meny* 'many', *eny* 'any', *fram fro* 'from', *prou3* 'through', *a3eynes a3eyns a3eyn* 'against', *po* 'then', *cherche* 'church', *owen* 'own', *deide* 'died', *hure* 'hear', *ferst* 'first', *cussede* 'kissed', *ded* - 'did', - *liche* '-ly', *hit* 'it', *pai* 'they', *ham* 'them', *bep* 'are', *shulde* 'should'

The forms *eny*, *ded* -, *hit* and *bep* suggest in general a southern, non-central part of the country. A cluster of southern forms, including *meny*, *fram*, *po*, *cherche*, *ferst* and *ham*, limit the possible area to a belt stretching from the SW half of Herefordshire across the

southern counties to Essex, excluding Worcestershire and E Gloucestershire but including Wiltshire, Hampshire and Surrey, as well as all areas to the south. Those forms that show spellings with <u> for OE *y*, *hure* ‘hear’ and *cussede* ‘kissed’, suggest that the text is more likely to belong to the western part of the area; the <e> spellings in *cherche*, *ferst* and *ded/-* are, on the other hand, common both in the east and west. In the west, the forms *a3eyn* and *shulde* delimit the likely area to Herefordshire; combined with the limited distribution patterns of *prou3* and the southern forms listed above, these forms limit the most likely area roughly to the southwestern part of the county, excluding the extreme south. Figure 24 shows the distributions of the forms *a3ein* *a3eyn*, *hure* and *prou3*, which illustrate the localization most clearly; while these forms occur scattered over most of the southern part of the county, their concentration in the SWML area makes the SW Herefordshire localization by far the most likely possibility. A very precise placing does not seem possible on the basis of the questionnaire forms only.

The language is highly consistent, with little variation. Despite the length of the text, it shows no particular changes of usage, except for a slight shift in preference from yogh to <gh> in words like *mi3t might*, and from <ay> to <ai> in words like *fayr fair*. There are few minor variants, some, like the single occurrence of *fra* ‘from’ may simply be errors. Most forms would seem to agree well with the localization. The text does, however, contain some features of lexis that are untypical for the Herefordshire area, notably *vn-to* ‘until’ and *t-fere* ‘together’, as well as the almost exclusive use of *call* rather than *clepe* ‘call’.

As the usage of the text is very regular and seems to contain no alien forms on the levels of orthography and morphology, it should provide good evidence for the dialect of the southwestern part of the county. However, the lexical items noted as untypical of the area should be discounted unless supported by other evidence.

Figure 24

Localization of LP 7370



The manuscript consists of 129 folios and contains the Prose *Brut*. It is the work of a single scribe, written in a fairly formal secretary hand with some anglicana features. The text of the *Brut* contained in the manuscript is the Common Version, with a continuation up to 1419 (see Matheson 1977: 49). The text itself begins on fol 6r; fols 1-5 contain a table of contents listed by chapter headings. The text from 1377 to 1419 (fols 110-129) was edited by Brie (1908); the analysis in *LALME* was based on this edition. The present analysis is based on a microfilm supplied by Cambridge University Library, and covers *ca* 35% of the entire text in three samples (fols 6-20, 60-69 and 110-129).

In *LALME*, the text was localized in Central Herefordshire, in what corresponds to a location somewhat to the northeast of Hereford on the geographical map. The language is not strongly dialectal and would seem to indicate a fairly late date; the following regularly occurring forms may, however, be used to localize the usage:

moch(e ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *prou3* ‘through’, *yef* ‘if’, *as-pey*
pey3 ‘though’, *togadir* ‘together’, *po* ‘then’, *streynth(e streinþe*
‘strength’, *drad-* ‘dreaded’, *dede* ‘did’, *hilde* ‘held’, *ham* ‘them’, *byth bith*
byn ‘are’, *schulde* ‘should’

In addition, spellings with <o> for short *a* before nasals (e g *mon* ‘man’, *onswere* ‘answer’) and with <u> for OE *y* (e g *first* ‘first’, *kussid* ‘kissed’) occur often enough to be considered significant

The forms *moch(e*, *mony*, *eny* and *drad-* as well as the <u> spellings for OE *y*, suggest the western and southern parts of the country. The <o> spellings in words like *mon* exclude the southwestern part of Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire; *schulde* also excludes SE Herefordshire and most of Gloucestershire. To the north, the area is delimited by a number of forms, including *prou3*, *pey(3)*, *togadir*, *po*, *dede*, *hilde* and *ham*; of these, *ham* excludes the entire northern half of Herefordshire and a large part of Worcestershire. Finally, together with the above forms,

the distribution of forms of the *streynthe* type delimits the likely localization to a limited part of central and eastern Herefordshire; this localization, using the forms *streynþ*, *mon* and *ham* is illustrated in Figure 25.

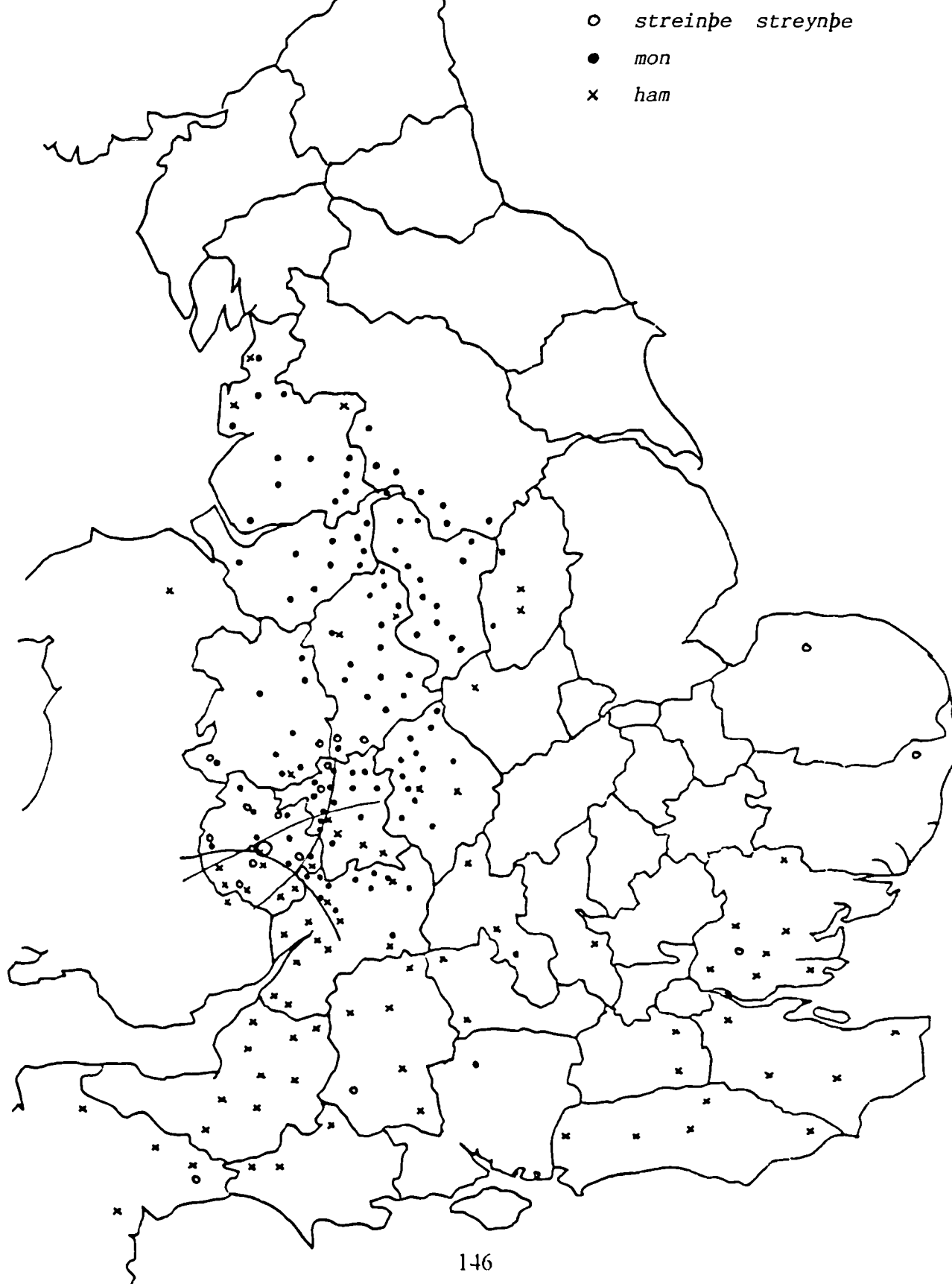
The text contains a relatively large amount of variation, usually involving large numbers of minor variants beside one clearly dominant form: so, while the main form for ‘much’ is *moch(e)*, the material also contains *mych*, *myche*, *much*, *mich*, *mochil*, *mochill*, *mychil* and *muchele*. Similarly, the notoriously variable item ‘through’ shows twelve variants besides the main form *þrou3*: *þrough*, *throu3*, *þrow*, *throw*, *through*, *þoru3*, *þrou*, *þro3*, *þurgh*, *thur3*, *þrou3t* and *þrowghe*. The variation is, in most cases, of a predictable kind, involving what Benskin and Laing (1981: 77) call ‘derived variants’, that is, ones that arise by analogical permutations of the available, orthographically equivalent segments: for example, the spellings *þrough*, *throu3* can be derived from *þrou3*, *through*. Such permutations, as Benskin and Laing note, may create large numbers of variants without in any way implying a *Mischsprache*.

The text contains few obvious relicts: all regular forms, and most minor variants, fit well into the area where the text was localized. A few minor forms are strongly dialectal, with distributions that would seem to centre on an area just south of that localized in Figure 25; so *meny* ‘many’, *noþer* ‘nor’, *asch-* ‘ask’, *hyre* ‘hear’, *hurde* ‘heard’, *hed* ‘had’, *hy* ‘they’, *schullyþ* ‘shall’ (pl). These forms may have been marginal in the scribe’s repertoire. On the other hand, the forms *vn-to* ‘until’ and *y-fere* ‘together’ do not normally occur in Herefordshire texts, but seem to belong to the *Brut* tradition (see p 142). The forms *awne* ‘own’, *strang* ‘strong’ and *eftir* ‘after’ look like sporadic northernisms (see pp 238-39); *strang* might, however, be explained as part of a general spread, during the fifteenth century, of <a> spellings in words like ‘land’, ‘hand’, ‘hang’ etc. Such spellings are not uncommon in the Herefordshire material; however, they are unlikely to reflect variants in the spoken mode (cf pp 66, 313). As the text is dated after 1427/8, but may be considerably later, these forms, like the minor variants *agayn(e)* ‘again’, *brydge* ‘bridge’, *þose* ‘those’, *þer* ‘their’ and *þem* ‘them’ might reflect the beginning spread of the Chancery Standard.

When such occasional alien or uncertain forms are discounted, LP 7420 may be assumed to provide quite reliable evidence for the usage of this area. However, apart

Figure 25

Localization of LP 7420



from the group of diagnostic forms used in the localization, the language is not strongly dialectal, and contains few traditional Southwest Midland spellings. This may in part reflect its relatively late date; at the same time, comparison with the early *Brut* text in MS Rawlinson B 171 (LP 7370) suggests that relative colourlessness might be a feature of the *Brut* tradition in Herefordshire.

7481/2 Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson B 173, fols 1-227; s xv (LALME 7481)

The manuscript consists of 230 folios, and contains the Prose *Brut*, followed by some miscellaneous writings. The text of the *Brut* is the work of two scribes, the first (A) covering fols 1-185, and the second (B) fols 186-227v. Various hands contribute to the writings on fols 227v-230 and to marginal scribbles throughout the manuscript. The Prose *Brut* text contains the Common Version and the first continuation; the second continuation, from 1377 to 1419, is incomplete, and followed by a different, later continuation covering the years 1421-31.

The writings on the last few pages, as well as the scribbles in the margins, are of great interest as regards the external context of the manuscript. The writings on fols 227v-230 consist of the following items:

fol 227v	Medical recipes
228r	List of oxen due on lands of Ewyas Lacy
	Foundation charter of the Abbey Dore
228v	Medical recipes/charms
229r	Charms continued; medical treatments for horses
229v	List of knights' fees held of honours of Weobley, Snowdell, Clifford, Kington, Caldicot <i>etc</i>
230r	List continued, followed by pen trials in a different hand, including an inscription in Welsh

The scribblings found elsewhere in the manuscript contain references to members of a Vaughan family, as well as some pieces of verse, including a Welsh *englyn*.

Two points are of particular interest. Firstly, the writings connect the manuscript firmly with the Western borderlands of Herefordshire. Both texts on fol 228r are connected with the lordship of Ewyas Lacy in the southern part of the marcher zone, while the list on fols 229v-230r involves the lordships to the northwest. Secondly, the appearance of Welsh marginalia in the manuscript suggests a bilingual context for its ownership. That the areas mentioned in the lists of dues and fees would have provided such a context is shown not least by the high proportion of Welsh names in the lists (see p 381); there seems to be little reason to doubt that the owners of the manuscript at an early stage belonged to this area. The name Vaughan, which appears in some of the scribblings, including a letter to 'Brother Vaughan' in what looks like a sixteenth-century hand, and the name 'Elynor Vaughan' in early italic letters, might refer to the baronial Vaughans of Emlyn; however, the name, which is the anglicized version of Welsh *bychan* 'small', was (and is) very common in English-speaking Wales and in the borderlands.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the two scribal texts were described as 'two hands in similar language' and combined to form a composite profile; the language was localized in western Herefordshire, roughly in the Clifford area. In the present study, it will be necessary to keep the two texts separate: as will become clear, the differences between them are considerable.

Firstly, there are numerous purely orthographic differences between the two scribal usages. Scribe A never uses thorn and only exceptionally yogh; he uses doubled vowels very frequently, mainly <ee> and <oo>, but occasionally also <aa> (e g *haate* 'hate'); he seldom uses unhistorical final *e*, and writes <sch> for 'sh-'. B, on the other hand, uses both thorn and yogh, has few double vowels, very frequent final *e*, and <sh> for 'sh-'. A feature of A's usage, but not of B's, is the use of <w> in words like *tw* 'two', *knve* 'knew', *nve* 'new', *shv* 'slew' etc. Spellings with <w> for *u* are, according

to *LALME*, particularly typical for East Anglia, especially Norfolk; however, as there is no reason to assume a Norfolk influence in A, it is more sensible to connect them with the similar spellings found in earlier Herefordshire MSS like Jesus 29 and Harley 2253 (LPs 7440 and 9260) where they are likely to reflect the Welsh use of <w> as a vowel symbol. An even closer connection may be assumed with the early seventeenth-century spellings of Lady Brilliana Harley of Brampton Bryan, N Herefordshire, who regularly writes *nwe* ‘new’, *blwe* ‘blue’ *etc* (see p 312). B, on the other hand, shows a tendency to drop and add final *t*, as in *brough* ‘brought’, *migh* ‘might’, *thought* ‘though’. While the significance of examples like these may be difficult to evaluate, they show that the two scribes have very different habits, and impose them freely on the text they are copying.

As regards S-features, the two profiles share a large number of forms; however, for the most part these tend to be colourless. The following list includes all shared forms in regular use for which variation might be expected:

eche ‘each’, *such(e)* ‘such’, *which(e)* ‘which’, *mekle* ‘much’, *many* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *fro from* ‘from’, *but* ‘but’, *or* ‘ere’, *ne* ‘nor’, *not* ‘not’, *ayenst* ‘against’, *self(e)* ‘self’, *togeders* ‘together’, *thens* ‘thence’, *whos(e)* ‘whose’, *morne* ‘morning’, *chirch(e)* ‘church’, *strenght* ‘strength’, *ask-* ((*ax-*)) ‘ask’, *died dyed* ‘died’, *yeve yeue* ‘give’, *her-* ‘hear’, *slayne* ‘slain’, *londe* ‘land’, *stonde* ‘stand’, *honde* ‘hand’, *drad- dred-* ‘dreaded’, *litell* ‘little’, *hyll* ‘hill’, *synnes* ‘sins’, *beribery-* ‘bury’, *first(e)* ‘first’, *did* ‘did’, *stede* ‘stead’, *fell* ‘fell’, *held(e)* ‘held’, *her* ‘her’, ‘their’, *thei they* ‘they’, *ben(e)* ‘are’, *s(c)huld-* ‘should’

Many of the shared forms are identical to those of the Chancery Standard; considering the late date of the text, they may reflect incipient standardization. Others, like *ne*, *londe* *etc*, *her* ‘their’, *ben(e)* ‘are’ may be considered colourless, while *eny*, *togeders*, *yeve yeue* are shared with the other texts of the *Brut* here considered, including the early Rawlinson 171 (LP 7370), and presumably belong to the *Brut* tradition. Only *mekle*, *morne*, *dred-* and *ayenst* stand out as distinctive forms shared by both scribal profiles; these forms would seem to preclude a very southern placing of the text, and their regular occurrence in both parts suggests that they may have been copied from the same exemplar.

While both scribal profiles contain a high proportion of colourless or standardized forms, the usage of scribe A also contains a number of strongly dialectal forms not shared by B:

vche ‘each’, *meche* ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *then* ‘than’, *thei they thay* ‘though’,
ayeyn(e) ‘again’, *togader* ‘together’, *tho* ‘then’, *streynth* ‘strength’, *sye* ‘saw’,
mon ‘man’, *onswer* ‘answer’, *thonk-* ‘thank’, *wes* ‘was’, *bury* ‘bury’, *-liche* ‘-ly’,
scheo ‘she’, *hur* ‘her’

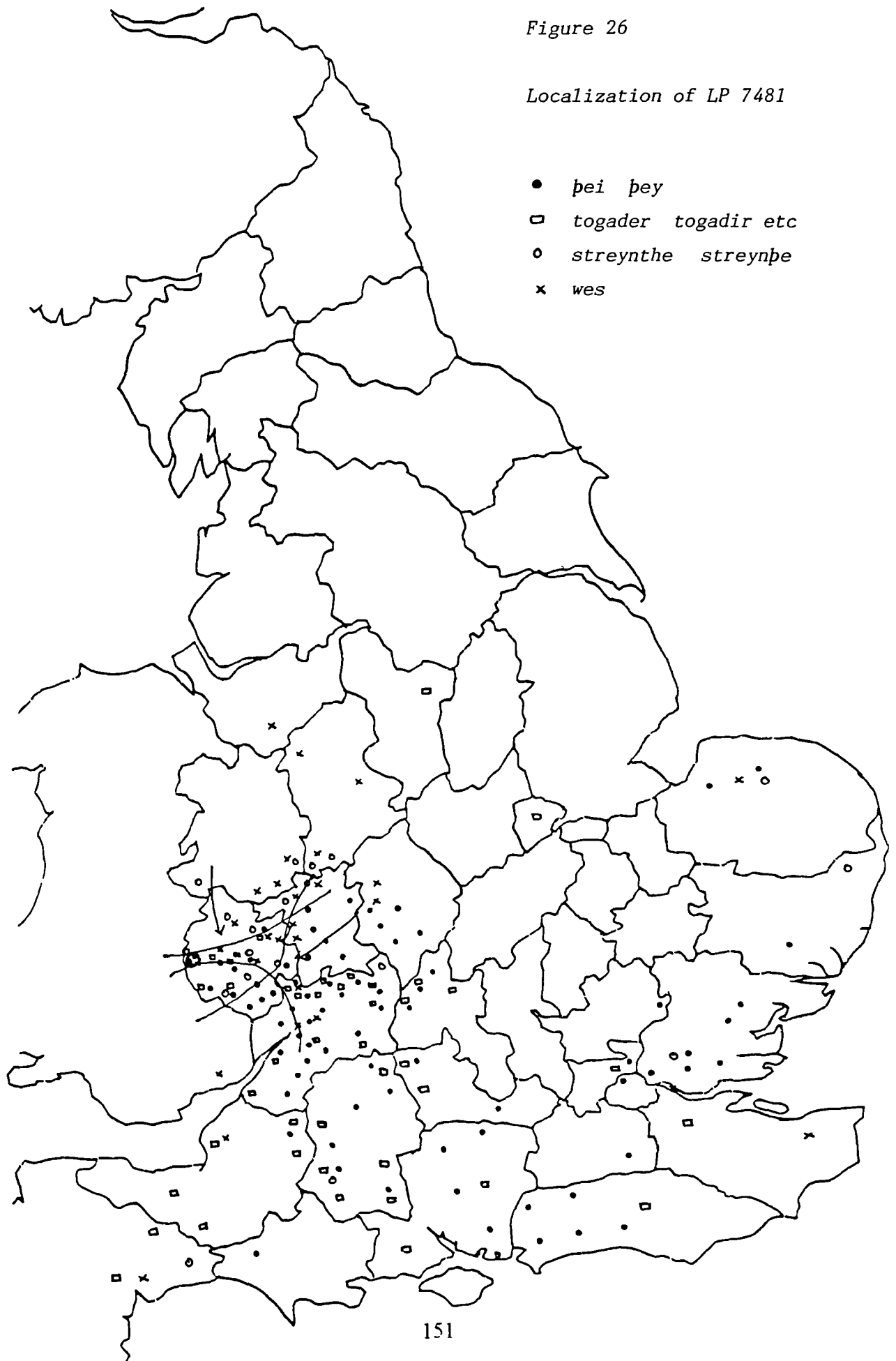
The forms *vche*, *mon*, *onswer*, *thonk-*, *wes* and *scheo* limit the area in which the usage of A can be localized to the West Midland area between Wirral and the Wye, excluding SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire. The forms *meche*, *thei they thay*, *togader*, *tho* and *streynth* exclude the northern part of this area; the southernmost of these, the *thei* type for ‘though’, limits the possible area to central and eastern Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and N Gloucestershire. Finally, the form *togader* excludes Worcestershire and Warwickshire, while *streynth* limits the possible localization to central and northeastern Herefordshire. This localization is shown in Figure 26, using the forms *pey*, *togader*, *streynth* and *wes*.

A more precise placing does not seem possible on the basis of the present material. However, some further inferences may be made on the basis of more contextual information. Firstly, as the text is a late one, the regular occurrence of strongly dialectal forms might suggest a fairly marginal localization. Various spellings in the text, in particular the type *mwe* ‘new’, *slw* ‘slew’ noted above, would seem to be particularly connected with the Welsh borderland, an area also strongly suggested by the extralinguistic connections of the manuscript. Within the area suggested by Figure 26, it would, then, seem that the most likely localization might be in the central part of W Herefordshire, in the Clifford - Kington - Eardisley area.

The remaining forms in A should next be considered. It was noted above that some of the shared forms may reflect beginning standardization. However, while a few minor variants, notably *nor* ‘nor’, and *their* ‘their’ must be considered alien to the dialect of the area, most of the regularly used forms shared by A and B are, in the early fifteenth century, used throughout the southern part of the country, and there is no reason to

Figure 26

Localization of LP 7481



exclude them from the scribe's dialect. The forms *mekle*, *morne* and *ayenst* are shared with B and may reflect a common exemplar. While the form *ayenst* shows no distinctive dialectal patterning, the other two forms might suggest an element of a usage somewhat more northern than the localization suggested above. The form *mukil* occurs as the main form of 'much' in MS Lincoln's Inn 150, localized as LP 4037 on the Welsh borders of S Shropshire; similarly, forms of the *mekel*, *mekyll* and *mykel* types occur as minor variants in several Shropshire and N Herefordshire texts. The *mekle* type might thus be assumed to have been an acceptable variant in the area. Likewise, *morne* occurs in LPs 7350, 7510 and 7520, and may be assumed to have been a variant form in central and northern Herefordshire.

The usage of scribe B, in contrast, is virtually colourless, as is shown by the following list of forms not shared by A:

moche 'much', *any* 'any', *iff yff* 'if', *þan* 'than', *yet 3it* 'yet', *ayene* 'again', *than* 'then', *thedir thedyr* 'thither', *whether whedyr* 'whether', *siluer* 'silver', *true* 'true', *bryn-* 'burn', *answer* 'answer', *it* 'it'

Most of these forms are entirely colourless or identical to Chancery Standard ones. A few, like *moche*, *than*, *thedir thedyr* and *bryn-*, broadly suggest a southern dialect; however, no precise localization is possible on the basis of these.

It may be concluded that, while the text as a whole is a late one, and shows some signs of standardisation, the usage of A contains a large number of strongly dialectal forms and can with reasonable confidence be localized in the central part of western Herefordshire. Apart from a few minor variants that should be considered relicts, the usage should provide good material for dialect study. As the sparse linguistic evidence for scribe B agrees with the external connections of the manuscript, as well as with the Herefordshire localization suggested for A, it may be assumed that both scribes belonged to the same general area of the Welsh borderland. However, the usage of B is too colourless to be of interest for the present study; as the text is, moreover, relatively short, it should be excluded from use as evidence.

4.2.7 *Memoriale Credencium*: LPs 7391 and 7392

7391/2 Oxford, Bodleian Library Tanner 201, fols 7-105; s xv 1/4 (*LALME* 7391)

The manuscript consists of 114 folios. The major part, fols 7-105, contains *Memoriale Credencium*, a theological treatise in prose intended for lay people, preceded by a few short texts, including a form of confession and a commentary on the seven deadly sins. The text of *Memoriale Credencium* is probably the work of three scribes, with hand A responsible for fols 7r - 11v.17 and fol 87r.1-7; hand B for fols 11v.18 - 86v; and hand C for fols 87r.8 - 105v. Kengen (1979: 4) cites A I Doyle for a view that the hands 'may possibly be one man alternating his style, since there are strong similarities of formation. They may however be by a trio of scribes trained together or teaching each other'. The script is a neat anglicana, with Latin citations written in textura. Throughout the manuscript, there are annotations in two hands, one of which seems to be contemporary and the other of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The name 'W Sancroft' occurs on fol 2, and there are ownership references to Richard Horne and Johannes Robinsonus on fol 107r; Kengen (1979: 25 n 3) identifies the former with Archbishop William Sancroft (1617-93), and suggests that Johannes Robinsonus might be identical with a canon of Gloucester, John Robinson (d 1598)

The text is complete, and ends on 105v with the colophon 'Explicit tractatus qui vocatur memoriale credencium'. It has been edited by Kengen (1979), with a discussion about its background and dialect; as regards the latter, his conclusions leave some room for doubt, and will be discussed below. *Memoriale Credencium* survives in four complete texts, none of which is a direct descendant of another.²⁰

The text is analysed from a microfilm housed in Edinburgh University Library. No separate Linguistic Profile is compiled for A, as the section is very short; however, interesting forms are noted in the discussion below. The stretch written by Scribe B is analysed in sections, consisting of fols 11v.18 - 15r, 25 - 44r and 64v - 85v; the analysed sections account for ca 65 % of his output. The shorter stretch copied by Scribe C has been analysed in its entirety.

Analysis

In *LALME*, the text of *Memoriale Credencium* (simply referred to as ‘Theology’) was originally analysed as two scribal texts, consisting of fols 7-86 and 87-end, and labelled ‘scribe B’ and ‘scribe C’ respectively. There is no reference to a third scribe corresponding to the hand here referred to as A. The profiles have been conflated to form a composite one, as ‘two hands in similar language’, with differing forms sometimes marked as belonging to either scribe. The language was localized in the southern part of central Herefordshire, roughly in the region of the city of Hereford.

Kengen, on the other hand, localizes the language in Gloucestershire. Together with his suggestion of sixteenth-century ownership of the manuscript in Gloucester, and the similar language of two of the other surviving versions, this leads him to suggest Gloucestershire as the area of provenance for the composition of the text; however, his localization, which is independent of *LALME*, rests on some doubtful premises.

As a starting point, Kengen uses the ‘isophones’ and ‘isomorphs’ defined by Moore, Meech and Whitehall (1935). He uses the E and N limit for a rounded vowel from OE *y* and *eo* (line F) and the N limit for the prpl ending *-eth* (line H) to delimit the possible area to the Southwest Midlands and the Southwest. Problems arise, however, when he reverses the boundaries and uses them in a negative way, as though they formed definite boundaries between mutually exclusive forms. Thus, while line K is intended to show the limits of present participle forms in *-and -end*, which only occur in the North and on the western and eastern margins, Kengen reverses it to stand for the outer limits of *-ing -yng*. Presuming that the latter could not occur outside the line, he excludes Herefordshire and Monmouthshire from consideration. Similarly, although with less drastic consequences, he uses the Southern limit for the present 3 sg ending *-(e)s* as a northern limit for the ending *-eth*. It should be noted in fairness that he could not have made the mistake, had he had access to *LALME*: it is now easy to ascertain that the *-ing -yng* forms are, by the fifteenth century, dominant all over the southern part of the country (*LALME* I: 391, map 345), and that there is a belt across the Central/North Midlands where both *-eth* and *-es* occur for the present 3 sg (*LALME* I: 466, maps 645, 646).

Kengen also makes use of the eastern limit of <o> for Germanic *a* before nasals (e.g. *mon* ‘man’); against his usual practice, he does not, however, give examples of forms with <o>. No examples occur in the sections analysed for this study, nor does the *LALME* profile contain any. However, the forms for ‘many’ include *mony*, *monye*, *money*, and it is possible that Kengen takes these as examples of *o* before nasals; the area where these forms occur is, however, much more extensive than that of *mon*, *con*, *onswer* etc, and the items are not comparable. Similarly, the forms *hond*, *stond* would have a lengthened vowel and appear as <o> throughout the southern part of the country.

Having excluded the western parts of the Southwest Midland area, Kengen localizes the text in Gloucestershire, comparing certain forms in the manuscript with the maps provided by Samuels (1963). The exact argument is unclear, but seems to rest mainly on the forms *hy* ‘they’ and *pei* ‘though’, as Samuels’ other maps involve forms that do not occur in the manuscript. Of these, *pei* ‘though’ occurs only once, and the regular form is *pou3*. The form *hy* ‘they’, on the other hand, is used regularly, and would indeed limit the area to Gloucestershire if Kengen’s earlier delimitations were sound. As it is, however, the form excludes N Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire, but leaves all remaining SWML areas, as well as large parts of the South and Southwest, within possibility. It would seem, then, that the localization should be reconsidered, making use of the material and methods now available.

The three stretches that seem to be the work of different scribes should first be compared. As regards purely orthographic features (W-features), there are some clear differences between the stretches: in particular, hand C stands out from the others. It regularly shows <sh> where A and B have <sch>, e.g. *flesh*, *shal* against *flesch*, *schal*; C also shows a preference for <y> rather than <i> in a number of items and, especially towards the beginning of the stretch, for <w> in words like *awngel*, *owre*. On the other hand, A uses <th> rather than thorn much more often than B and C, and also seems to use fewer contractions; B, finally, is the only one to use regularly superscript <u> in *p^u* ‘thou’. These differences coincide so precisely with what looks like changes of hand that it seems virtually certain that three scribes are involved.

The most important differences on the level of S-features are listed in Figure 27. There are few clear-cut changes; rather, the usages seem to represent different selections

Item	Hand A	Hand B (LP 7391)	Hand C (LP 7392)
ANY	any 7 eny 3	eny	eny 6
THROUGH	þurgh 4 thurgh 2 þorgh 1	þurgh ((þourgh þorgh þorow))	þorow ((þurgh))
NOT	not ((nat nou3t))	not ((nou3t nat))	nou3t not
WHEN	when 2	when whan	whan ((when))
CHURCH	churche 9	chirche	chirche 6 churche 4
FLESH	-	fleisch- > flesch	flesh
SHE	-	hue 3 > heo	heo 5
THEY	þei 3 thei 3 þey 2	þey (hy) ((þei))	hy þey (þei)
ARE	bup 4 buth 2 be 1	bup ((beþ buth))	beþ (bup)
SHOULD	schold/- 3	schuld/- ((schold/-))	shuld/- (shold)

Figure 27: Differences in linguistic usage between scribes A, B and C (LPs 7391 2)

from a common pool of forms. Most of the dialectally distinctive forms in the text are shared by all scribes. The short A-stretch does not provide enough material for comparison and may contain a degree of working-in usage; it will not, therefore, be considered as primary evidence. However, it seems feasible to attempt a localization of the shared usage, based on forms that occur at least in B and C. The following forms may be used for this purpose:

muchē moche ‘much’, *meny mony(e)* ‘many’, *bulk(e)* ‘the same’, *ar* ‘ere’, *oper* ‘or’, *a3eyn-* ‘again(st)’, *huyr- hur-* ‘hear’, *furst* ‘first’, *heo* ‘she’, *hy* ‘they’, *haR hare* ‘their’, *bup bep* ‘are’, *s(c)huld* ‘should’, *segge sigge* ‘say’

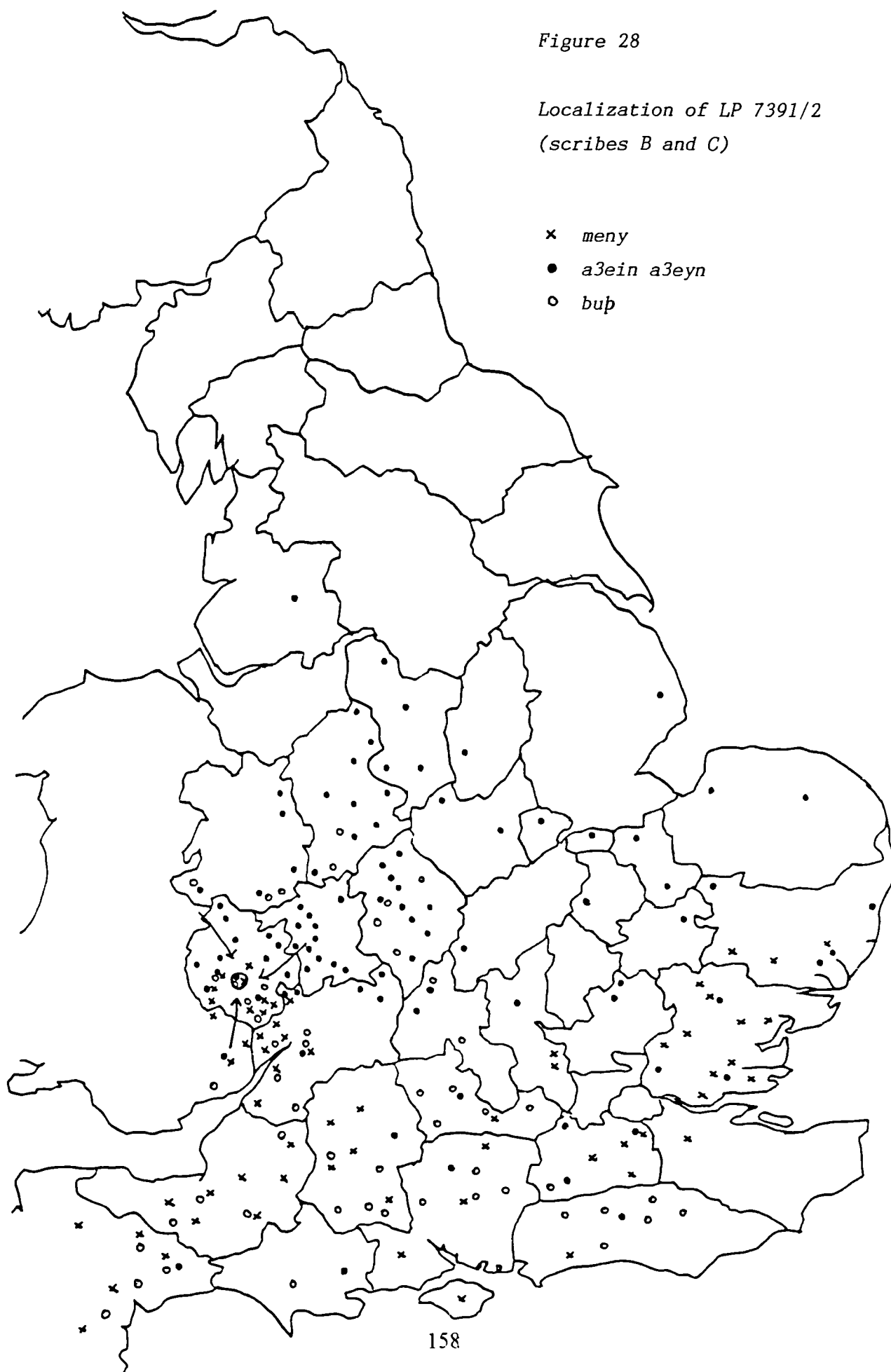
The forms *muchē moche*, *oper*, *furst*, *heo*, *bup bep* and *segge sigge* suggest a southern or western dialect. Within this general area, the forms *meny*, *bulk(e)*, *huyr- hur-* and *hy* provide a northern limit, excluding the northern half of Herefordshire, as well as Worcestershire and E Gloucestershire. The forms *a3eyn* and *s(c)huld*, finally, limit the likely area to central Herefordshire. The localization is illustrated in Figure 28, using the forms *meny*, *a3eyn* and *bup*.

The relative precision with which the shared forms can be localized, and the lack of clear-cut differences noted above, suggests that all three scribes may have copied from a shared exemplar, and that they shared very similar constraints. However, as regards the relative frequencies of the forms, there are still some clear differences between the usages; these should be considered next.

The usage of scribe B contains a certain amount of variation, mainly of an orderly kind that involves forms commonly used in the area, e g *when/whan*, *pilke/pulke*, *haR hare*, *muchē moche*. For most items, there is a single clearly dominant form, and the language is on the whole regular. A few shifts of usage take place within the text. Most notably, the forms for ‘she’ and ‘flesh’, *hue* and *fleisch fleysch* respectively in the earlier part, are replaced by *heo* and *flesch*. From fol 39r on, the form *it* appears alongside *hit*; there is a slight change of ink or writing style between fols 38 and 39, and it is possible that this indicates some change of circumstances, perhaps a pause in copying, which may be connected with the change in linguistic usage. Apart from such

Figure 28

Localization of LP 7391/2
(scribes B and C)



fairly clear-cut changes, the B stretch shows shifts in the relative frequencies of some forms: thus, the forms *whan* ‘when’ and *hy* ‘they’ become progressively more frequent as compared with *when* and *þey*, and some minor variants, e.g. *þorow* ‘through’ and *beþ* ‘are’, appear mainly towards the end of the B stretch. All these shifts tend to modify the usage of B in the direction of that of C.

A number of minor variants appear in B, especially in the latter part of the analysed text; the most distinctive are listed below:

swich(e ‘such’, *eney* ‘any’, *þey3 þei* ‘though’, *net nowt nau3t* ‘not’, *tho* ‘then’,
oune ‘own’, *vyhte* ‘fight’, *ych* ‘I’, *here* ‘her’, *þem* ‘them’, pr part *-and*, *til* ‘to’

The last three, each of which occurs once only, seem to represent northern usage; as occasional northern forms commonly occur in southern manuscripts at this time, their appearance is in no way remarkable. Other forms suggest a SWML usage, perhaps of a slightly more southern type than the localization of the shared forms: so *swich(e*, *eney*, *þey3 þei*, *tho*, *vyhte*, *ych*. Apart from the sporadic northernisms, however, all forms in B fit into the localization of the shared forms.

The changes outlined above may reflect a gradual change in the scribe’s copying behaviour; as the latter forms tend to agree with the usage of C, this might reflect a progressively *literatim* drift. However, as the changes do not take place until relatively late in the text, it is more likely that they reflect an underlying shift of usage in the scribe’s exemplar. Both sets of forms may therefore be considered part of the scribe’s repertoire, and may be included as evidence, provided that they occur frequently enough to suggest regular usage.

The usage of scribe C is likewise fairly consistent, and contains fewer variants. All forms exclusive to C, or dominant only in this stretch, agree well with the localization of the shared forms; so *þorow* ‘through’, *hy* ‘they’ and *to-gadere* ‘together’. A few slight shifts of usage take place within the stretch: the forms *chirche* and *þurgh þorgh* are replaced with *churche* and *þorow*, and *it* gradually comes to be used beside *hit*. It is notable that the overall patterns of change in the B and C stretches show a uniform direction:

B

þurgh ((> þorow))
 when (> whan)
 chirche
 fleisch > flesch
 hue > heo
 hit > hit it
 þey (> hy)
 buþ ((> beþ))

C

((þurgh)) þorow
 whan ((when))
 chirche > church
 flesh
 heo
 hit > hit it
 hy þey
 beþ (buþ)

These shifts involve relatively few forms, take place late in the text, and seem to be unconnected with changes on the purely orthographic level. The most likely explanation would seem to be that the scribes reproduce changes in the exemplar, whether these represent earlier changes of scribe or traces of an earlier scribal drift. On the level of W-features, however, each scribe introduces his own forms; even here, however, the usages remain similar enough to suggest either a very modest degree of translation or a close adherence to shared spelling conventions.²¹

The B and C texts may, then, both be localized within the central Herefordshire area defined above. The linguistic profiles should be kept apart: considering the differences in W-features and the shifts of usage during both stretches, they are best seen as different, although closely related, scribal contributions. However, the data contained in the two stretches may be mapped together, and the shared usage may, for the present purpose, be considered to represent a single ‘informant’. Overall, the regional coherence of the material means that the text should provide excellent material for dialect study.

Samuels (1984 [1989]: 258) noted a close similarity between the language of the present text and that of two other MSS, Princeton Garrett 138 (LP 7380) and BL Sloane 1009. While not identical, the usages are similar enough to be considered to reflect the dialect of a single area. Both the central localization and early manuscript associations suggest that a Hereford placing would be the most likely (see Samuels 1984 [1989]; also current pp 79, 247, 249).

4.2.8 The Swynderby papers: LPs 7401 and 7402

7401/2 Hereford, County Record Office AL19/7, fols 98v-106v; s xiv ex (*LALME* 7400)

The text that forms the basis for LP 7400 in *LALME* is of particular interest for several reasons: it is exactly dated, relatively much is known about its author and historical context, and, judging from a list given by Margaret Laing (1991: 28), it was used as an anchor text in *LALME*. However, its treatment in the Atlas poses several problems, which will be discussed below.

The text consists of five pieces of writing by the Lollard preacher William Swynderby, copied into the Register of John Trefnant, bishop of Hereford (1389-1404). They relate to the trial for heresy of Swynderby in Hereford in October 1391, and consist of the following:

- 1) fifteen articles by Swynderby, answering in turn to each charge laid against him (30 June),
- 2) letter to the bishop from Swynderby in answer to a summons to Ledbury (20 July),
- 3) defence presented by Swynderby at the trial (3 October),
- 4) appeal by Swynderby against the sentence of excommunication,
- 5) letter of appeal to the Knights of Parliament.

The texts appear on fols 98v-106v, interspersed with Latin; the register contains no other English writing, except for a passage on fol 122v that is too short to show distinctive linguistic usage. In 4) and 5), part of the text is misplaced, presumably as the result of an exchange of two pages in the exemplar; the break-off points at 105v.25, 106r.3 and 106r.48 are marked by a later hand.

The register contains entries by more than one hand, possibly several; all the Swynderby letters are, however, copied by one scribe in a clear and regular secretary

hand. The scribe distinguishes between <p> and <y>, but occasional confusion suggests that his exemplar(s) did not; he makes numerous errors, sometimes crossed over and corrected by himself.

The register has been edited by Capes (1916); this edition was used as a basis for the analysis of the text in *LALME*. Comparison with the manuscript shows, however, that the edition is not reliable in its reproduction of the text. The following points may be noted: a) contractions are expanded silently; b) *thorn* and *yogh* are replaced by <th> and <y>; c) certain spellings are ‘corrected’ (e.g. *he* for MS *hi*, *after* for MS *aftur*, *sayen* for MS *sapen*, *fleyschly* for MS *fleyscly*, etc); and, finally, d) the order of the misplaced parts of 4) and 5) has been changed without notice. At least the b) and c) changes obscure greatly the linguistic character of the text.

The present analysis is based on a study of the manuscript itself, as well as of photocopies of the relevant pages. It should be noted that the Bishops’ Registers are housed in the County Record Office, Hereford, not in the Cathedral Chapter Library, as stated in *LALME*.

The historical context

As the text is listed among the *LALME* anchor texts, it will be of interest to consider briefly its extralinguistic background before the language is discussed. Apart from the information contained in the register itself, the following account is based on McFarlane (1952, 1972) and Crompton (1968-69).

William Swynderby was one of the most important Lollard preachers of the late fourteenth century. It is assumed that he originated from the village of Swinderby, on the border of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. He first appears as a hermit and revivalist preacher in the Leicester area, where he joined the Lollard community, led by William Smith, in the Chapel of St John the Baptist. At this time he is described as a young unbeneficed priest. In 1382, he appeared on trial before the bishop of Lincoln, where he recanted. He then left Leicester for Coventry, where ‘his ministry again proved acceptable enough to provoke the bishop to action’ (McFarlane 1952:125); moving on,

he eventually appears in western Herefordshire. The first reference to him dates from November 1388, when the sheriff of Herefordshire was ordered to arrest him; no arrest was made. Next, in 1390, bishop Trefnant sent out a denunciation of heresy to Swynderby, then in Monmouth (McFarlane 1952: 129). The proceedings to which the present texts relate took place during the following year.

Having recanted before, Swynderby would have faced imprisonment; however, he was never arrested, but disappeared over the border into Wales. The possibility of this course of action probably formed one motive for his presence in Herefordshire; it has been noted that Lollard headquarters tended to be placed near county borders to facilitate escape from one area of jurisdiction to another (Thomson 1965: 1-2). According to McFarlane (1952: 129), Swynderby's 'normal range...[was], it seems, along the western borders of Herefordshire north from Clifford, Eardisley and Almeley to Wigmore and Kington, from which places it was easy for him to slip out of the diocese into the safety of the Welsh hills'. Another possible motive is suggested by McFarlane (1972). Several 'Lollard knights', noblemen with Lollard sympathies, had their power concentrated in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and South Wales, and it seems that Swynderby received support and protection from some of these (McFarlane 1952: 134). The records of the trial suggest that Swynderby's influence in the area was considerable. Lollardy seems to have gained ground both among the English and the Welsh population in the county; Swynderby's movements, as well as his eventual escape, suggest at least some contact with the latter.

Bishop John Trefnant was himself a Welshman, from the village of Trefnant in North Wales. According to Capes (1916: i), nothing is known of his early life until he appears in Rome, where he held the post as auditor of the papal palace until he was given the see of Hereford. His actions in connection with the heresy trials of Swynderby and the latter's associate, the Welshman Walter Brut, were very slow and cautious; according to McFarlane (1972: 222-225), reluctance to persecute was not uncommon among the higher clergy in the early days of Lollardy, when the movement still attracted support on all levels of society. In other matters, notably legal, Trefnant seems to have acted very efficiently indeed. He presided regularly at ordinations, of which Capes (1916: vi) notes:

...to these, as a Welshman by descent, he attracted an unprecedented number of his countrymen. One of them, who bore the same name as himself, had by his gift the benefices of Ross and Whitbourne, and may have been his nephew.

It may be assumed that the Swynderby papers, as well as those relating to the trial of Brut, were entered into the register while they were still of current interest; otherwise it would be hard to explain the unparalleled meticulousness with which they were copied (the texts, especially those by Brut, are of portentous length). The date of the text as we have it can thus hardly be much later than the proceedings themselves.

The dialectal structure of the text

As it was used as an anchor text, the *LALME* placing of LP 7400 in the Hereford area was presumably based on its external connections. However, although plentiful, the information is far from straightforward to relate to the dialect of the text. The text was without doubt copied out in Hereford; still, there is no guarantee that the dialect reflects that of the place where it was copied. This problem is, of course, relevant to most anchor texts. The solution is generally to check the usage of a potential anchor text against others, and against the existing network of localizable texts; with a sufficient number and density of texts, the likely reliability can be assessed. An analysis of the present text shows, however, that it contains a very large number of variants, involving most items in the questionnaire, and including forms that are geographically incompatible. The text seems, accordingly, likely to represent a *Mischsprache* or some kind of ordered mixture; in either case, the total number of forms, as they stand in the *LALME* LP, should not be used as evidence for the usage of any one area.

It is not clear to what extent these problems were confronted in the compilation of *LALME*, and there seems to be some confusion about the text. Firstly, it is used as a basis for the Herefordshire LP 7400, which contains all the forms collected from the Capes edition and is used as material for the maps and the county dictionary; as LP 7400,

it is listed in the Repository List of the Index of Sources (*LALME* I: 90) and the County List under mapped sources for Herefordshire (*LALME* I: 199). However, it is also found in the County List under the unmapped material both for Herefordshire and Lincolnshire, where it is said to contain a mixed language (*LALME* I: 200, 213). The entries have no cross-references and follow slightly different conventions; it seems that the text was included twice by mistake, both as suitable evidence material and as a *Mischsprache*. These entries clearly do not represent *LALME* at its most reliable, and the status of the Swynderby papers as dialectal evidence will need reconsideration; this will, first of all, require a detailed analysis of their language.

Surveyed as a whole, the text undoubtedly looks like a *Mischsprache*. It contains a mixture of forms that cannot plausibly be taken to belong to a single area, most notably some northern forms (e g pres sg *-es*; *geue* ‘give’), alongside corresponding Southern ones (*-ip -ep*; *3if- 3iff-*). It also contains a high number of variants for many items. Extreme examples are ‘their’ and ‘says’ for which the following forms are found: *heire, here, her, hire, hore, hor, þeire, þaire, þayre, þaere, þer, saip seip sayþe sayt sais says seys*. More important still, the majority of all forms show two or more distinct spellings that seem to be in regular use.

An analysis producing a partially ordered profile (see p 33) shows, however, that the forms are not evenly distributed throughout the text. For this study, the five individual texts were analysed separately to begin with. Clear-cut differences could immediately be noted between text 3 on the one hand and texts 4 and 5 on the other. These include the following distinct forms:

Item	Text 3	Texts 4/5
MANY	many	mony
IF	3if	yef
NOT	not	noght
YET	3it	yet
AGAIN(ST	a3eyn-	agayn-

CHURCH	churche	chyrche churche
FIGHT	fyhte	feghte
IT	it	hit
THEY	þei	þai
<i>pres sg</i>	-iþ -eþ -eth	-es
GIVE	3iffen	geuen

Text 1 seemed to contain a mixture of both sets. However, further analysis shows that the two sets occur in separate portions of this text, with only a short stretch of mixed usage in between. A change takes place at fol 99r.21, whence the usage continues mixed to the end of the page, the new forms increasing in proportion; the replacement is complete from the beginning of fol 99v.

The usage of the first part of text 1 is virtually identical to that found in 3, while the remainder agrees with that found in 4 and 5. Text 2, although short, agrees with the former usage. Within each stretch, the usage is quite regular, with few internal changes. Using the symbols X and Y to denote the two usages, the composition of the text can be summarized as follows:

Scribal usage X:	fols	98v - 99r.20	(1a)
		101v	(2)
		103v - 105r.25	(3)
Scribal usage Y:	fols	99r.21 - 101r	(1b)
		105r.42 - 106v	(4 and 5)

The differences between the two usages are considerable, and include orthographic detail (see Figure 30, p 170 below). As all parts of the text are copied by a single scribe, the regular differences suggest a *literatim* scribe, or one inclined in that direction. Various features of the text support this: the frequent errors, the occasional confusion between the letters *y* and *þ*, as well as the displacement of a page of text, all suggest a method of

copying that does not necessarily involve the retention of meaningful units in the mind, but tends to work with 'a unit of copy smaller than the word' (Benskin and Laing 1981: 96). The finished result is essentially a composite text, containing two quite distinct usages, for which separate LPs must be drawn up.²²

The text must, accordingly, have been copied from exemplars containing different usages. Distinctive forms that occur in both stretches may, then, either reflect the constraints or contribution of the scribe, or they may go back to Swynderby himself, provided that he originally wrote all the texts. Such forms are listed below, excluding very minor variants.

yche 'each', *suche* 'such', *whyche* 'which', *myche* 'much', *mony* 'many',
any 'any', *from* 'from', *purgh* 'through', *yef-al* 'though', *to(-bat)* 'until',
or 'or', *ne ny* 'nor', *self* 'self', *where* 'where', *when* 'when', *ax-* 'ask',
stond 'stand', *aftur* 'after', *furst* 'first', *prust* 'priest', *puple* 'people', *y j*
'I', *my* 'me', *yow* 'you', *bae* 'they', *hem* 'them', *pr pl -en*, *ben* 'are', *mae*
'may', *schal* 'shall', *schulde* 'should'

Many of the shared forms are fairly colourless; some, like *any*, *from*, *self* would fit in virtually anywhere, while others, like *suche*, *whyche*, *myche*, *stond*, *hem* may be considered colourless in the southern part of the country. A few forms, notably *when*, *ben* and *schulde* would exclude a very southern localization. Together with these, *mony*, *aftur* and *furst* suggest the West Midland area from N Cheshire to NW Gloucestershire.

The majority of the forms on the list fit well into this area. However, at least two forms, *yef-al* and *to(-bat)*, do not agree with a West Midland localization. A third form, *yche*, occurs as a border form in many parts of the country, chiefly between the distribution areas of the southern and western *eche* or *vche* types and the northern *ilk(e)* *ilk(a)* type; while it occurs in Worcestershire and Warwickshire, it is mainly restricted to texts that show northern or eastern influence, and its status in the area must be considered marginal. It is, however, common in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. The occurrence of *yche* *iche* in the present text probably reflects Swynderby's usage, retained throughout the text as a familiar, although not necessarily actively used, form

for West Midland scribes. For the *to(-þat)* type, the *LALME* material does not provide sufficient evidence, as forms for ‘until’ were collected only for the southern part of the country, where the form is rare; incidental evidence suggests, however, that it is typical of the NML area.²³ The distribution of *if-al* type forms for ‘though’ in *LALME* forms a clearly delimited area which centers on Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and S Yorkshire.

The recalcitrant forms for which mappable evidence is available, i.e. *iche yche* and the *if-al* type, co-occur in the Nottinghamshire area, as well as in the adjacent parts of S Yorkshire, S Lincolnshire and NE Leicestershire (see Figure 29). As this corresponds to Swynderby’s presumed geographical origins, it seems reasonable to assume that the forms, as well as *to(-þat)*, represent his own usage. There are, however, also other reasons to assume that these forms represent the usage of one original author. Firstly, as they may be considered lexical variants in relation to their possible functional equivalents (e.g. *pough*, *þei*; *till vntil*), they are more likely to be retained in copying than unfamiliar morphological or orthographical variants would be (see pp 30-31, 109-110). Secondly, their spelling differs somewhat between the two usages, following the respective spelling systems: so X has *3if-al* and sporadic *yef-al*, while Y has *yef-al*, *ef-al*. The differences between the X and Y usages must, then, reflect intermediate copying at least of one part, and probably of both. The scale of the differences suggests, a) as already noted, that the present scribe must have copied the text relatively *literatim*, and b) that at least one intermediate scribe produced a fairly thorough translation.

Finally, the shared forms include a group of rare spellings, including *þae* ‘they’, *mae* ‘may’ as well as *my* ‘me’, *hi* ‘he’; these are most numerous towards the beginning, through the first X stretch and into the first Y one, and occur thereafter as minor variants throughout the text. The spellings are of interest, and will be discussed below; at this stage it may be noted that they are not likely to go back to Swynderby’s usage. Any regionally distinctive parallels to these forms in the *LALME* material (e.g. spellings like *ny* ‘ne’, *byn* ‘are’) point to the West Midland area rather than the east; secondly, the survival, with some regularity, of such rare orthographic variants in both the X and Y stretches would be unlikely, considering the differences between the stretches otherwise. It is more likely that these forms were introduced by the last scribe, and it will be suggested below that they are well in keeping with his copying behaviour otherwise.

Figure 29

Localization of shared
non-WML forms in LP 7401/2



The two usages (X and Y)

There are several striking differences in orthographic usage between the X and Y stretches, some of which are shown in Figure 30. It may be noted that the symbol yogh is not used in Y, and that the use of thorn is more limited than in X. In the case of some of the variants, most notably the spellings for ‘nought’, ‘right’, it seems likely that Y has retained the forms of the original; in most cases, however, it is impossible to tell which scribe is translating, or whether both are. It is, however, clear that, at least on the level of W-features, both usages represent a definite system and not a random mixture of forms. The two usages should next be considered separately, in order to assess their dialectal coherence and, if possible, to localize them.

Feature	X	Y
/ai/	ey (<i>þey, a3eyn</i>)	ay (<i>þay, agayn</i>)
initial /j/	3- (<i>3if, 3e</i>)	y- (<i>yef, ye</i>)
medial /v/	-f(f)- (<i>hafe, 3ieffen</i>)	-u- (<i>haue, geuen</i>)
/θ / (in lexical words)	þ (<i>boþe, þefe</i>)	th (<i>bothe, theof</i>)
EME /xt/, /çt/	-ht (<i>nohte, riht</i>)	-ght (<i>noght, right</i>)

Figure 30: Differences in orthographic usage between stretches X and Y in LP 7401/2

The X usage

The usage here denoted with X takes up roughly one third of the entire text. It contains a fairly regular usage which, unlike Y, contains no obviously regionally incompatible forms. Those distinctive forms that occur in X but not in Y are listed as follows:

wuche ‘which’, *muchē* ‘much’, *bot* ‘but’, *3if* ‘if’, *nohte nouht* ‘not’, *3it* ‘yet’,
a3ens a3eyn ‘against’, *owen* ‘own’, *triewe* ‘true’, *3if 3ife* ‘give’, *3iffen 3ieffen*
‘given’, *fyhte* ‘fight’, *wes* ‘was’, *dud(e)* ‘did’, *yuel* ‘evil’, *wordely wordly*
‘worldly’, *heire þeire* ‘their’, *han* ‘have’, *lyfe(n)* ‘live’; also single occurrences of
vche ‘each’, *oiper* ‘either’, *yerþe* ‘earth’

The forms *muchē* and *dud(e)* suggest a southern or western dialect, while *wuche*, *nouht*, *a3eyn*, *fyhte* and *han* limit the likely localization to Herefordshire and Worcestershire, excluding the extreme south of both counties. The form *wes* and the minor variant *vche* exclude the southwestern part of Herefordshire; finally, the distributions of *wordely* and *lyfe* delimit the most likely localization to central Herefordshire. The localization is illustrated in Figure 31, using the forms *wes*, *wordel-* and *lyf(e)*.

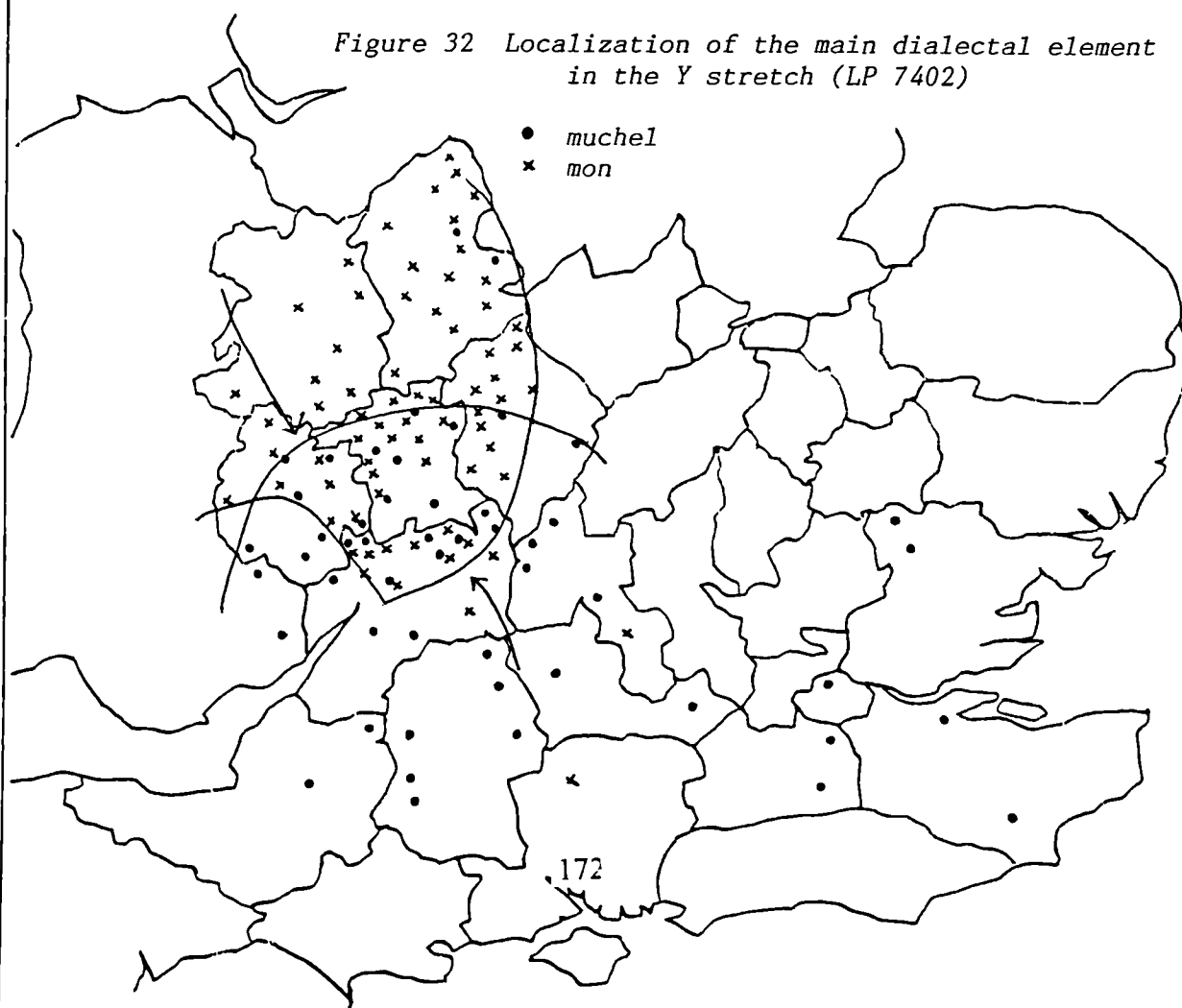
Most forms in X fit well into this area; this, and the relative precision of the localization suggests that the text has been translated fairly thoroughly. However, a few forms, mostly minor variants, do not agree with the localization and must be assumed to be relicts. Only one such form, *þeire* ‘their’, occurs in regular use. As *þ-* forms for ‘their’ and ‘them’ occur frequently as minor variants in Herefordshire texts, it may be assumed that the form was familiar enough to the X scribe to be retained unchanged; if *þeire* (or, more probably, *yeire* or *theire*) was the actual form in X’s exemplar, this might also have influenced the unusual spelling of the vowel in the variant form *heire*.

Of the remaining forms that occur in X but not in Y, only *oiper* ‘either’ is alien to the area. According to *LALME*, *oiper* is exclusively a Lincolnshire form, and may be assumed to go back to Swynderby’s usage. Similarly, a group of minor variants that also occur in Y, and do not fit into the Herefordshire localization, must be considered relicts; so *gyf* ‘give’, *þaire þayre* ‘their’, *sais seys* ‘says’. Apart from these exceptional forms,

Figure 31 Localization of the X stretch (LP 7401)



Figure 32 Localization of the main dialectal element in the Y stretch (LP 7402)



the usage of X as a whole, including forms shared with Y, is quite regular, virtually all forms agreeing well with the localization in Central Herefordshire. It would seem that the text is translated quite thoroughly, and may be assumed to provide fairly reliable evidence for the dialectal horizons of a Central Herefordshire scribe; accordingly, the X text might be used as evidence in the present study, provided that the scribal layers are borne in mind, and care is taken in interpreting the data.

The Y usage

The usage of the Y stretch presents a more complicated picture, as it seems to contain a large number of forms that cannot be fitted into a single area. The following list shows those distinctive forms that occur in Y but not in X:

iche ich ‘each’, *wheche* ‘which’, *mech muchele* ‘much’, *but* ‘but’, *yef* ‘if’, *yet* ‘yet’, *agayn agayns* ‘against’, *chyrche chirche* ‘church’, *geve geue* ‘give’, *feghte* ‘fight’, *mon* ‘man’, *aftur* ‘after’, *fuyr* ‘fire’, *fulful* ‘fulfil’, *dede* ‘did’, *euel* ‘evil’, *theof* ‘thief’, *people poeple* ‘people’, *hit* ‘it’, *pai* ‘they’, *hore hor* ‘their’, *pr sg -es*, *shuln* ‘shall’ (pl), *woln* ‘will’ (pl)

Following the method of separating different dialectal layers outlined by Benskin and Laing (1981: 82-84), the first step is to accommodate as many forms as possible into a single area. It seems that the majority of the forms would best fit into the SWML area. The narrowest localization into which most of the forms can be fitted is shown on Figure 32; it is delimited by the forms *mon* and *muchel*, and comprises of E Herefordshire, N Gloucestershire and most of Worcestershire. This area can accommodate the following forms: *wheche*, *mech*, *muchele*, *but*, *yef*, *yet*, *chyrche*, *chirche*, *feghte*, *mon*, *aftur*, *fuyr*, *fulful*, *dede*, *euel*, *theof*, *people*, *poeple*, *hit*, *pai* and *hor(e)*. The form *feghte* does not occur in the area, but can be derived as an analogical permutation (‘derived variant’, see p 145) from the commonly occurring *fe3te fehte* types and the not exceptional use of medial <gh> rather than yogh or <h>. The status of *ich(e)* ‘each’ is more doubtful. It

occurs as a rare variant in parts of Worcestershire, and might thus be included in the SWML layer; however, as the form is likely to be authorial, the question is of relevance only if the Y usage will be used as evidence for a SWML dialect.

This leaves the recalcitrant forms *agayn agayns*, *geve geue*, *-es*, *shuln*, *woln*. These would fit into most parts of the North Midland area, along a broad belt from Cheshire and Lancashire southeast to N Norfolk, including all of Lincolnshire. They might, accordingly, also be assumed to reflect the usage of Swynderby himself.

However, the text plainly does not meet the criteria for a thoroughgoing *Mischsprache*, as defined by Benskin and Laing (1981: 77): rather than a random mixture, it seems to represent some kind of regular selection. The most obvious explanation would be that the usage represents constrained selection within broad constraints, as was assumed for the retention of the form *þeire* 'their' by the X scribe. However, such a procedure might be expected to result in a more colourless language, and it would be hard to account for the numerous strongly dialectal western forms like *yef*, *mon*, *theof* and *hor(e)*. A more satisfactory explanation might be that the Y scribe's own repertoire contains a regionally mixed set of forms. As Benskin and Laing (1981: 86) note, geographically 'mixed' usages arise as scribes move from one place to another, and may account for such seemingly contradictory usages as that of the present text. Whatever the exact background, it seems clear that the usage of the Y stretch should not be used as evidence for any one dialectal area.

The contribution of the present scribe

The discussion so far may now be summarized. It appears that the two distinct scribal usages contained in the Swynderby papers, here termed X and Y, reflect the copying, by two different scribes, of texts originally written, presumably by William Swynderby, in a NE Midland dialect or a usage containing a strong NE Midland element. The X usage is effectively a translation and the Y usage a *Mischsprache*, while both preserve traces of the original language. These intermediate versions were then copied out into the registrar by a single scribe, who seems to have copied them very nearly *literatim*. It was

suggested above that the scribe may have contributed a number of unusual spellings which occur scattered throughout the text, and are unlikely to go back to Swynderby. These spellings should now be considered, and they are summarized in the following list.

- 1) <ey>/<ei> for ME /i:/ in X *dreyfe* 'drive'; Y *feife* 'five'
- 2) <i>/<y> for ME /e:/ in XY *hi* 'he', *my* 'me', *wy* 'we'; X *bysyche* 'beseech'; Y *hire* 'here', *symes* 'seems' (some of these may belong to 9 below)
- 3) <y> for ME /ɛ:/ in XY *dryde* 'dread', X *ryde* 'read', *spyche* 'speech', Y *lyuefull* 'allowed'
- 4) <u>/<ou> for ME /o:/ in Y *fute* 'foot' and X *soupe* 'true' (*u* expuncted in MS)
- 5) <ae> for ME /ai/ in XY *mae* 'may', X *þae* 'they', *thaere* 'their'; Y *saet* 'said' *faen* 'fain' *maentyne* 'maintain'
- 6) <oe> for ME /ɔi/ or /ʊi/ in X *poent* 'point'
- 7) <uw, w> for ME /iu/ in Y *truwe* 'true', *dwe* 'due'
- 8) <y> for ME /ɛ/ or /ə/ in XY *ny* 'nor'; X *dybe* 'does', *dyssyre* 'desire', Y *hym* 'them' (possibly also some examples in 2 above: e g *my* 'me', *by* 'be')
- 9) <ff> for ME /f/ (when not a capital) in X *ffor* 'for'; Y *ffewe* 'few', *ffor* 'for'
- 10) <dd> for ME /ð/ in Y *kloddyng* 'clothing'
- 11) doubling of *p*, *t* and *s* in medial position in X *clepped* 'called', Y *writtyng* 'writing', X *also* 'also', *dessyren* 'desire'; Y *accuseth* 'accuses', *relesse* 'release'
- 12) various spellings of sibilants, as in X *fleyscly* 'fleshly', *worshippe* 'worship', *chulde* 'should', *schild* 'child'; Y *chuche* 'such', *syrche* 'church', *worchip* 'worship', *schildren* 'children', *-nesshe* '-ness'

Most of these forms are either unrecorded in *LALME* or fall outside the questionnaire. The *LALME* material therefore gives limited help, apart from a couple of suggestive patterns: for example, spellings like *by(n)*, *ny* for ‘are’ and ‘nor’ occur scattered in a belt across the West Midlands, along the Welsh border.

The spellings for the long vowels (types 1-4) look as though they might reflect the results of the group of sound changes known as the Great Vowel Shift. However, apart from the early date of the text, this involves a problem: as the Great Vowel Shift involves no change in the phonological system, its results are not normally shown in spelling. It should, accordingly, first be considered whether any other explanation might be found.

Numerous spellings of ME /e:/ with <i> and <y> have been cited by earlier scholars as indicative of the Great Vowel Shift; however, these have since been explained in other ways, notably by Dobson (1968: 652-3). According to him, the spellings would in most cases reflect a shortened vowel, the regular result of shortening of /e:/ being /ɪ/. For many of the other spellings, it is similarly possible to find separate explanations. For example, the rare spellings of /ai/ with <ae> were explained by Luick as examples of a sporadic lowering of the second part of the diphthong, a view with which Dobson agrees (see Dobson 1968: 773 and references there cited)

However, the spellings of /i:/ with <ey, ei> would here seem difficult to interpret as anything else than an indication of diphthongal pronunciation; also, considering the coexistence of types 1-4 in the text, a single, systematic explanation would seem more attractive than a number of separate assumptions of sporadic changes. If it were assumed that the spellings reflect the Great Vowel Shift, a plausible reason should, then, be given for why the shifted forms are shown in spelling. Ideally, the same explanation should also account for as many of the remaining spellings (numbers 5-12) as possible.

In general, spellings that reflect sound changes like the Great Vowel Shift, which cause no change in the phonemic system, can be expected to occur where there is contact between different systems. Such spellings may be used when the speech of a stranger is imitated;²⁴ more generally, they may appear in texts that involve contact between English and another language, as in the case of English texts written using the orthographical conventions of another language. A famous example is the *Welsh Hymn*

or *Hymn to the Virgin*, a poem written in English using the conventions of traditional Welsh verse, and the earliest text hitherto known to show reliable evidence for shifted vowels in the South. The poem survives in fourteen MSS from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries; a diplomatic edition was published by Dobson (1955). According to him, the *Hymn* represents 'English pronunciation as it sounded to a Welshman somewhat before 1500' (1955: 85). The *Hymn* is not the only example of its kind: Llanstephan MS 117 contains English prayers written mainly in Welsh orthography, dated 1546; several other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Welsh manuscripts also contain short pieces of English wholly or partly spelled according to Welsh conventions. A list of these is given by Parry-Williams (1923: 18-20).

The *Hymn to the Virgin* and the prayers in Llanstephan 117 both contain certain distinctive features of spelling that reflect the differences between the English and Welsh systems. Interestingly, these spellings show a striking resemblance to those found in the Swynderby text. Figure 33 (pp 178-79) lists examples of the relevant spellings in all three texts; the readings from the *Hymn to the Virgin* are given from Dobson's 1955 edition and the Llanstephan MS ones from the facsimile reproduction in Parry-Williams (1923: frontispiece).

The similarities of the Swynderby spellings with those of the other two texts, the Welshness of which is not in doubt, suggests strongly that the former spellings also show the influence of Welsh orthography. The spellings of the diphthongs and consonants (numbers 5-7 and 9-10 on p 175) are identical with regular Middle Welsh usage: so <ae> for /ai/, <oe> for /oi/, <uw> for /iu/, <ff> for /f/ and <dd> for /ð/. The spellings with <y> for /ɛ/ or /ə/ (8) may show an influence of the convention of using <y> for unstressed vowels in Welsh. The spellings listed as 11 and 12 might, finally, also be explained with Welsh influence, although other explanations might be equally plausible: the doubling of medial unlenited plosives and *s* is another typical feature of Middle Welsh orthography, and the confusion in the spelling of sibilants might reflect the fact that Middle Welsh (like the modern variety) only had one sibilant, against five in ME.

If the influence of Welsh orthography seems plausible for these spellings, it might then be extended to those that seem to represent shifted vowels (numbers 1-4). As in the case of the *Hymn to the Virgin* and the Llanstephan prayers, contact between

LP 7401/2
1390's

Hymn to Virgin
? ca 1500

Llanstephan 117
1546

ME /i: /

<ei, ey>
dreyfe, feife
'drive' 'five'

<ei>
ei, preid, Kreist
'I' 'pride' 'Christ'

<ei>
ei, mei
'I' 'my'

ME /e: /

<i, y>
hi, my, symes
'he' 'me' 'seems'

<i>
hi, mi, wi
'he' 'me' 'we'

<i>
swit, bisich
'sweet' 'beseech'

ME /ɛ: /

<y>
dryde, ryde
'dread' 'read'

<e>
leding
'guide'

<e>
gret
'great'

ME /ai /

<ae>
mae, thae
'may' 'they'

<ae>
mae, dae
'may' 'day'

<ae>
mae, dae
'may' 'day'

ME /ɔi /, /ʊi /

<oe>
poent
'point'

<oe>
boe, asoel
'boy' 'assoil'

-

ME /iu/

<uw, w>
truwe, dwe
'true' 'due'

<uw>
uws, truwith
'use' 'truth'

<uw, vw>
truw, vertvw
'true' 'virtue'

ME /ə/, /ɛ/

<y>
ny, hym, by
'nor' 'him' 'be'

<y>
ddy, by
'the' 'be'

<y>
formy
'former'

ME /f/

<ff>
ffor, ffewe
'for' 'few'

<ff>
ffor, ffest
'for' 'feast'

<ff>
ffor, ffyred
'for' 'fired'

ME /ð/

<dd>
kloddyng
'clothing'

ddys, wydd
'this' 'with'

ddis
'this'

Figure 33: Welsh orthography used in LP 7401 2 (the Swynderby papers), the Hymn to the Virgin and Llanstephan 117.

the two systems would account for why the effects of the shift are shown in spelling. If this is accepted, the text should be of considerable interest as evidence for the early working of the sound change. The earliest definitive evidence for the Great Vowel Shift in the South of England has so far been the *Hymn to the Virgin*, for which a rough date of around or shortly before 1500 has been proposed (Dobson 1955: 72); the present text predates the *Hymn* by about a century, and, unlike the *Hymn*, it can be dated precisely.

A detailed discussion of the spellings is beyond the scope of the present study; a few features may, however, be noted briefly. Firstly, the system of front long vowels in the Swynderby text seems to differ from that in the *Hymn*, suggesting that the two texts might represent different subsystems resulting from the vowel shift: while the *Hymn* keeps apart the ME close and open *e* sounds (*hi*, *mi* but *leding*), the former spells both with <i> or <y> (*hi*, *my*; *dryde ryde*). Secondly, none of the three texts contain spellings that would indicate a shift of ME /a:/. This might indicate that a distinctive shift of the low front vowel took place considerably later than that of the other front vowels, at least in relation to the Welsh vowels, and in the variety of English on which the spellings are based. Thirdly, the <uw> spelling in words like ‘true’, ‘due’ presumably shows the English vowel sound being equated with the Welsh (falling) diphthong /ɪʊ/, still heard in Welsh English pronunciations (Millward 1989: 311).

It was noted above that these spellings are virtually certain to have been produced by the scribe of Trefnant’s register. The suggestion that they reflect Welsh orthographical conventions might be considered quite plausible in such a context, both in the light of external evidence and on consideration of the scribe’s copying behaviour. Firstly, there is Capes’ (1916: vi) suggestion that John Trefnant, as a Welshman, attracted a large presence of his countrymen at ordinations in Herefordshire, and that he gave a benefice to a man from Trefnant, possibly a relative. In the light of what looks like his general favouring of Welshmen, it is not unlikely that he might have employed one as a scribe. As the registers of fourteenth-century bishops of Herefordshire confirm, the copying of English texts would be exceptional. The registrar would need no competence in writing English, and the evidence of the present text suggests, indeed, that he had none. *Literatim* copying of the consistency shown in the present text seems to have been rare in the later ME period, and Benskin and Laing (1981: 88-89) expressly

link its occurrence in the earlier period with the scribes' predominant copying of Latin rather than English texts. A fourteenth-century scribe used to copying Latin, and not fully confident about English spelling, might similarly be expected to copy more or less *literatim*. Similarly, a number of corrections made by the scribe seem to involve slips into such usage that was above suggested to reflect Welsh convention: so *sy* 'see' is corrected to *se* and the letter *u* is expuncted in *souþe* 'true'. Finally, the Welsh spellings are most frequent towards the beginning, although they occur in all parts of the text; this might indicate that the scribe gradually became more used to the spellings of the English text.

It seems, then, that the composite character of the text and its unusual spellings can best be explained as the result of nearly *literatim* copying, by a Welsh scribe, of texts containing two distinct usages. Both usages seem to represent intermediate copyings of texts originally written by William Swynderby; of these, the first usage (X) is a fairly thorough translation into Herefordshire usage, while the second (Y) contains a mixed language. The X usage, contained in LP 7401, may be used as evidence for the dialect of the Central Herefordshire area, as long as obvious relicts and Welshisms are excluded and some care taken in the interpretation of forms. The Y usage, on the other hand, is not suitable for use in the present study.

4.2.9 The dialect of William Herebert: LP 7410

7410 London, British Library Additional 46919 (*olim* Phillipps 8336), fols 205-211; s xiv 1/2 (*LALME* 7410)

The manuscript consists of 211 folios, and contains a collection of miscellaneous texts, mostly in Anglo-Norman, but also with some Continental French, Latin and English. The manuscript was compiled, with additions and annotations, by friar William Herebert (d ?1333), in whose handwriting several of the pieces are written, including the part here analysed (see Gneuss 1960: 169-177). This text, contained on fols 205-211, consists of nineteen pieces of verse in English, mostly translations of Latin hymns and antiphons. A note on fol 205, in the same hand, attributes the translations to ‘frater Willelmus Herebert’ and notes that he wrote them ‘in manu sua’. The identification of the hand with William Herebert seems beyond reasonable doubt; the evidence has been summarized by Gneuss (1960), who also shows that the translations are virtually certainly the work of Herebert, with the exception of one poem, *Heyl leuedy se-stoerre bryht*.²⁵

The remainder of the manuscript contains a wide range of items, including a manual of instruction in the French language, treatises on subjects such as hunting and falconry, proverbs, recipes, sermons and a large collection of verse, both religious and secular. According to Gneuss (1960: 172), the manuscript contains the work of thirteen different scribes. Writings in the hand of William Herebert occur at several places, consisting mainly of sermon texts or notes, largely in plummet, as well as marginal notes and corrections to the other texts. Except for a few scattered lines, the poems on fols 205-211 are the only English written by him.

William Herebert is said to have been born in Wales (‘ex Brytannica gente, apud Vuallos oriundus’ cited from Bale; see Gneuss 1960: 169-70 and references there cited), presumably in the second half of the thirteenth century. He entered the Franciscan Order at Hereford; later, he studied at Paris (1290) and Oxford, and became, in 1318, Reader in Divinity to the Franciscans in Oxford. According to some sources, he died in 1333, and was buried in the Franciscan convent in Hereford. Apart from the writings in the present

manuscript, Herebert's annotations also occur in several manuscripts that belonged to the Fransiscan house in Hereford in medieval times (see Gneuss 1960: 171-172).

Fourteen of the poems appear in Brown (1957: 15-29), while the remaining five, together with additions and corrigenda to Brown's edition, are printed in Gneuss (1960: 180-186). The present analysis is based on these edited texts, and covers the entire material.

The dialect of the poems

As an authorial holograph, the text is of obvious interest as linguistic evidence. Because of the connection of Herebert with Hereford, together with the strongly Southwest Midland character of the language, various scholars have used the text as evidence for the Herefordshire area, in particular the south of the county (see references in Gneuss 1960: 187). In *LALME*, it is localized in the Hereford area and seems to have been considered an anchor text (see Samuels 1984 [1989]: 258). Gneuss (1960: 186-187), however, notes some points of uncertainty as regards the localization of the dialect on external grounds:

Abgesehen von der Frage, ob man mittelenglische Dialektgrenzen überhaupt so genau festlegen kann, wird dabei allerdings vergessen, daß Herebert weder nachweislich in Herefordshire geboren wurde noch dort sein ganzes Leben verbracht hat; vielmehr scheint er weit umhergekommen zu sein und hat vermutlich einige Jahrzehnte in Oxford gelebt. So muß zumindest zweifelhaft bleiben, ob er den Dialekt von Herefordshire rein wiedergibt.

The argument that Herebert spent a large part of his life away from Herefordshire, and is therefore unlikely to have preserved his dialect 'pure', is, to some extent, a valid one. However, it is fair to assume that Herebert's spelling system would in the main have been based on his early education in Hereford; his later studies are unlikely to have affected his

English spelling very much. On the other hand, while the length of the periods he spent in Hereford and Oxford respectively are not known, it is fair to assume that a long sojourn in Oxford may have influenced Herebert's own spoken usage, and it is quite possible that his writing might reflect such an influence, or, in the terminology of Benskin and Laing (1981: 86), show a '*Mischsprache* as spontaneous usage'. However, this should only be assumed if suggested by the actual linguistic forms.

In an attempt to assess the dialectal grounds for the Herefordshire localization, Gneuss compares Herebert's usage with that of a number of other manuscripts; most of these are, however, no longer considered to represent the dialect of Herefordshire. The closest similarities that he finds are, in fact, with two manuscripts of which the Herefordshire connection still holds, *viz* Harley 2253 and Royal 12.C.xii (see below p 231 ff); also Ker 1965: xxii-xxiii; Samuels 1984 [1989]); still, he notes some differences between their usage and that of the present scribe, implying that the regional character and coherence of Herebert's dialect should be left open to doubt.

Although the relatively early date of the text means that some care must be taken in the comparison, the availability of *LALME* and the related methodology now makes the task of localizing Herebert's usage on dialectal grounds considerably more approachable. As long as due allowance is made for the possibility of changes in distribution patterns between Herebert and the bulk of the *LALME* material, the following forms may be used for localizing the text:

oeuch(e uche euch 'each', *whuch* 'which', *muchel moeche* 'much', *ey* 'any', *þorou* 'through', *bote* 'but', *nouht* 'not', *a3eyn-* 'against', *sulf* 'self', *mon* 'man', *nome* 'name', *prute* 'pride', *kunde* 'kind', *sunne* 'sin', *vurst* 'first', *boe* 'be', *wordl(e* 'world', *hoe a* 'she', *hoe* 'they', *pr pl -eth*, *boeth* 'are', *shulde* 'should'

The regular appearance of <o> for Gmc short a before nasals and <u> for OE y delimits the possible placing to the WML and SWML areas. The forms *uche*, *mon*, and *shulde* exclude the southwestern part of Herefordshire, SE as well as Worcestershire and all except the NW extreme of Gloucestershire, while *whuch*, *muchel*, *sulf*, *hoe* 'she' and the

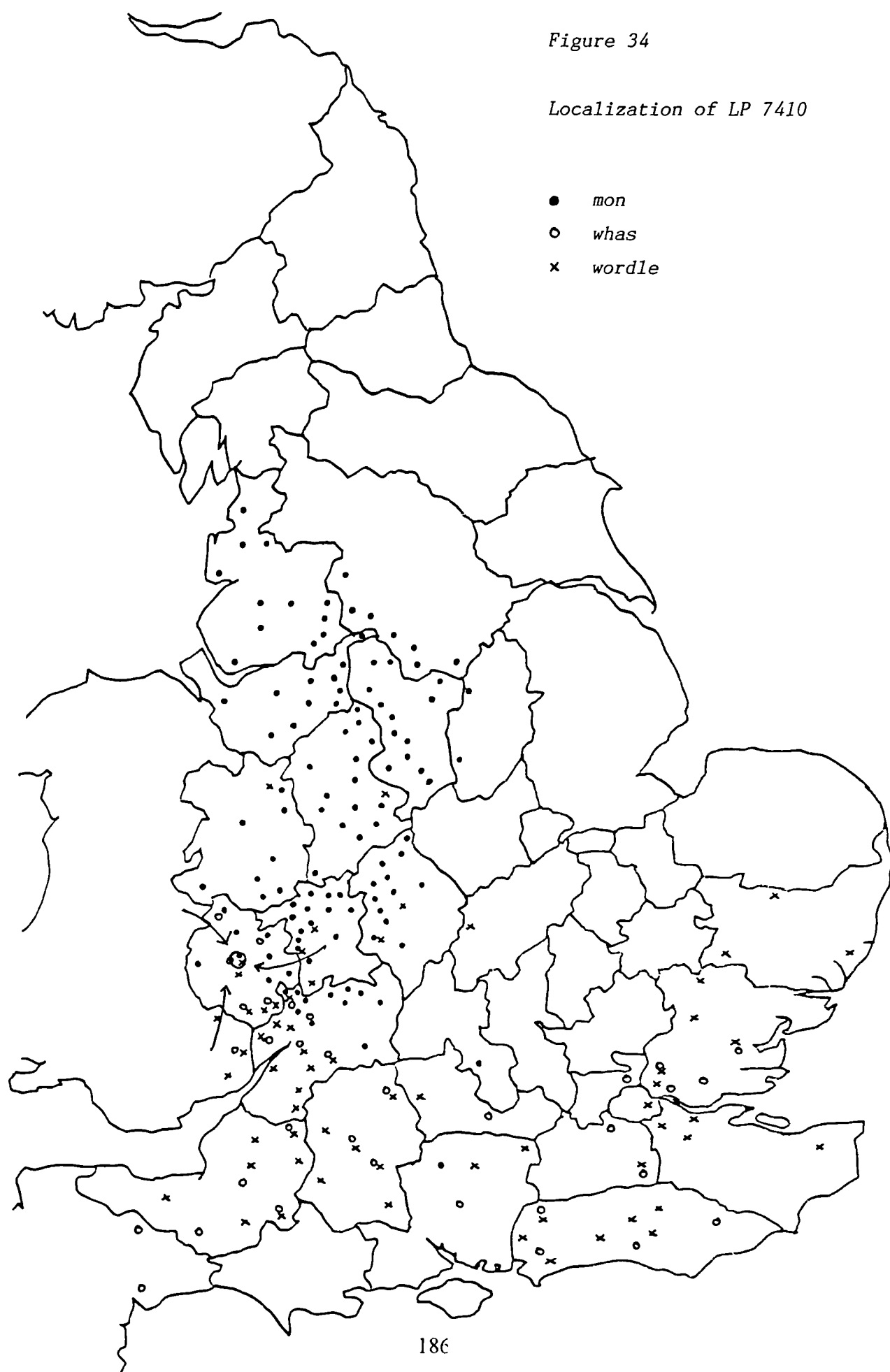
virtually regular use of initial *v-* for *f-* exclude the northern parts, leaving an area consisting of the northeastern half of Herefordshire, most of Worcestershire and the immediately adjoining areas of W Warwickshire and NW Gloucestershire. The forms *oenuch(e euch* ‘each’ and *ey* ‘any’, which agree with the earlier usage of AB and related texts, suggest the western part of this area as more likely; finally, the forms *whas*, *wordle* and *a3eyn* limit the localization to a wedge-shaped area running from central Herefordshire to the NW extreme of Gloucestershire just south of Ledbury. This localization is shown in Figure 34. The distribution of the *heo hoe* type forms for ‘they’ is in *LALME* concentrated in the northern parts of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and might thus favour the central Herefordshire localization; however, as scattered occurrences of this type occur in N Gloucestershire, the latter area cannot be entirely ruled out. A more precise localization cannot be suggested purely on the basis of comparison with the *LALME* material. Considering the biographical information, however, it would seem most natural to assume that Herebert’s usage reflects spelling habits current in the city of Hereford; the general lack of distinctively southern forms also suggests a central Herefordshire placing.

However, William Herebert’s usage contains one feature that sets it apart from most Herefordshire texts: there are several examples of syncopated present 2 and 3 sg forms of verbs with a non-dental stem consonant, e g *helpth* ‘helps’, *drincst* ‘drinkst (thou)’. In the later Herefordshire material, syncopated forms occur only rarely, and exclusively in dental-stem verbs. Only one earlier text, the late thirteenth-century miscellany contained in MS Jesus 29 (LP 7440), localized in SE Herefordshire, contains a relatively high proportion of syncopated forms. The feature seems to have been recessive during this period, and its appearance in both Jesus 29 and the present text is well in keeping with the relative proximity in dating and localization of the two texts.

Otherwise, no forms in the text disagree with the later evidence for the central Herefordshire area. It also fits well into the pattern of the earlier texts; its language is most clearly related to the usages of Jesus 29 and Digby 86, localized in E Herefordshire and NW Gloucestershire respectively (see p 258), but it shows a clearly more northern usage than the latter (e g *hoe* ‘they’, *shulde* ‘should’ against *hy*, *s(h)olde*).

Figure 34

Localization of LP 7410



Accordingly, there seems to be no particular reason to assume that William Herebert's usage would reflect anything but a spelling system based on a Herefordshire variety. As shown above, the forms fit best in the central area, and it is most likely that Herebert's usage reflects that of the city of Hereford. On the basis of external evidence, his spelling system probably derives from usages current in the Franciscan house in the city.

A full study of Herebert's linguistic usage is beyond the scope of this work; some of its most interesting features will, however, be discussed in chapter 6. Despite its relative shortness, the text is of considerable value as dialect evidence. In particular, the autograph status of the text, together with its verse structure, would seem to provide interesting possibilities for a study of the relationship between spelling conventions and the spoken mode; some suggestions concerning this relationship as evidenced by Herebert's spellings are made in 6.3.1 (see p 351 f).

4.2.10 *The Life of Gregorius*: LP 7430

7430 London, British Library Cotton Cleopatra D ix, fols 161-166; s xiv (*LALME* 7430)

The manuscript is a collection of miscellaneous texts, including a fragment of the *Southern English Legendary* on fols 118-166. The fragment is the work of two scribes. The first scribe copied the text on fols 118-161, including the last few lines of the *Life of St John the Evangelist*, the *Lives* of St Thomas of Canterbury and Theophilus, *Miracles of Our Lady*, the *Life of St Cecilia* and the beginning of the *Life of Gregorius*; this text appears as LP 7180 in *LALME* and is localized in Gloucestershire. The text on fols 161-166, which contains the remainder of *Gregorius*, was copied by the second scribe; this stretch was used as the basis of LP 7430 and localized in Herefordshire. This latter scribal text will be considered here.

The present text is the only surviving copy of this version of *Gregorius*. It has been edited by Horstmann (1877) and Keller (1914), both of whom assign the hand of

the present scribe to the late thirteenth century; however, Brown (1916-20 I: 267) places both Cleopatra scribes in the fourteenth century, a dating with which the general character of the language agrees. The present analysis is based on Horstmann's edition, and covers the entire text.

Analysis

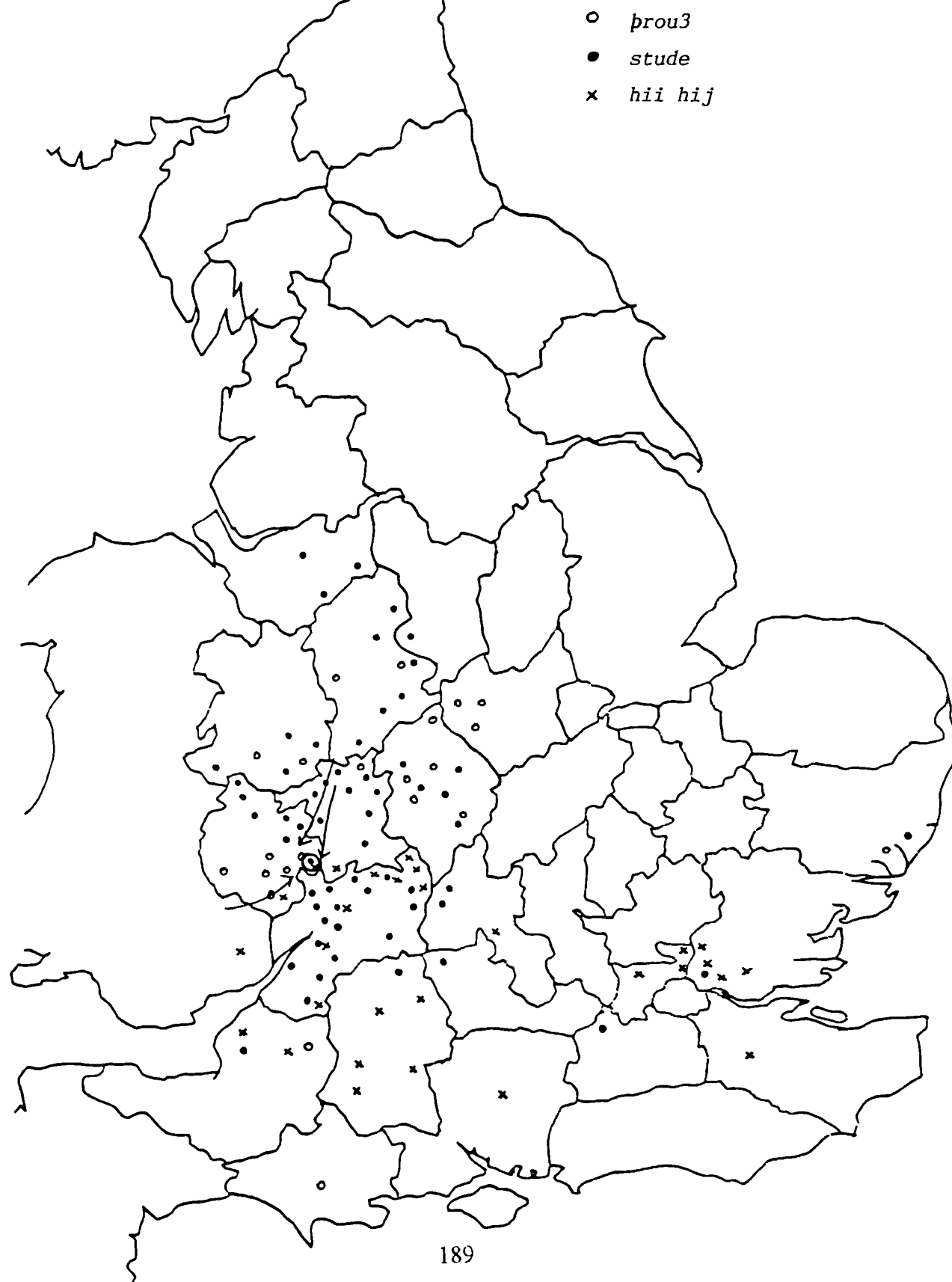
The dialect of LP 7430 was localized by Samuels in what corresponds roughly to the Ledbury area in E Herefordshire. Although short, the text contains a large number of distinctive forms, of which the following may be used for localization:

*vc*he 'each', *muchel* 'much', *mony monye* 'many', *eny* 'any', *pulk* 'the same', *fram* 'from', *prou3* 'through', *ac bote* 'but', *pei* 'though', *ar* 'ere', *a3eyn/-* 'against', *sulfe* 'self', *streynþe* 'strength', *clup-* 'clepe', *v-* for *f* as in *veteres* 'fetters', *mon* 'man', *þonk-* 'thank', *prude* 'pride', *fuyre* 'fire', *lutel* 'little', *kunne* 'kin', *dud* 'did', *stude* 'stead', *iseo* 'see', *huld* 'held', *heo* 'she', *hij* 'they', *bep* 'are'

The forms *mony*, *eny* and *heo*, as well as the <u> and <uy> spellings for OE *y*, suggest the southern or western part of the country, while *vc*he and *mon* exclude SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire. A large number of forms provide a northern limit, including *muchel*, *pulk*, *fram*, *prou3*, *bote*, *pei*, *sulfe*, *ar*, *þo*, *veteres* and *bep*. Of these, *fram* and *hij* exclude the northern part of Herefordshire, while *hij* also excludes all except the SW extreme of Worcestershire. Within the remaining area, the forms *a3eyn*, *prou3* and *streynþe* limit the possible area to Herefordshire. Finally, as shown in Figure 35, the distributions of *prou3*, *streynþe* and *stude* delimit the likely localization to the Ledbury area. This placing in the extreme east of the county also agrees with the occurrence of the form *clup-*, which is common in Gloucestershire but occurs in no other Herefordshire text.

Figure 35

Localization of LP 7430



A few items show variation between forms that would seem to be equally acceptable in the area, so *i*° ~ *ich* ~ *j* 'I' and *hire* ~ *here* 'her'. There are few minor variants, most of which fit well into the area. The single occurrence of *hij* 'she' must, however, be considered a relict. In the Herefordshire material, this type occurs only in the *King Horn* text in MS Harley 2253 (LP 9260), in which it forms part of a southeastern element (see Samuels 1984 [1989]: 257); a similar explanation is likely here. The linguistic usage suggested by the rhyming evidence differs considerably from the non-rhyming usage, and suggests that the original was written in a different dialect (e.g. *beo*: *me* 355-57, *wend*: *kende* 512-14, *side*: *pryde* 587-9, *hende*: *kunde* 603-5, *wedde*: *hadde* 772-74, *blame*: *name* 1100-2, *chirch*: *werche* 1257-59). The rhymes (in particular the form *kende*, required several times) suggest an eastern provenance; considering the relict form *hij*, the Southeast would seem most likely.

The difference between the rhyming evidence and the strongly dialectal non-rhyming usage of the text suggests that it has undergone a thorough translation, whether by the present scribe or by an earlier translator. The usage may be assumed to provide good evidence for the dialect of the Ledbury area; however, its shortness should be taken into account, and infrequently occurring forms should be used with caution.

4.2.11 *Confessio Amantis*: LP 7450

7450 Cambridge, St John's College B. 12 (34), fols 1-214; s xv 1/4 (*LALME* 7450)

The manuscript consists of 214 folios and contains *Confessio Amantis* by John Gower. The text is the work of a single scribe, writing a neat anglicana formata. Apart from a single gap of 184 lines in the first book and two missing leaves in the middle part of the manuscript, the text of the poem is complete.

Confessio Amantis is a long poem, of ca 68 000 lines, divided into a prologue and eight books. It survives in 49 manuscripts, excluding fragments (Hartung XVII: 2408-09). The texts are grouped into three main recensions (see Macaulay 1900: cxxviii); thirty-one manuscripts, including the present one, belong to the first recension, which was probably completed by 1390. The poem was edited by Macaulay (1900), based on the text of MS Bodleian 3883 (Fairfax 3). More recently, the language of the manuscripts of *Confessio Amantis* has been studied by Smith (1985, 1988b), and an individual study of the present manuscript, including full dialectal analysis, has been carried out by Okumura (1991). In an important article, Samuels and Smith (1981 [1988]), have shown that Gower's own usage contained elements both of NW Kent and SW Suffolk usage, and that it survives almost intact in two texts of *Confessio Amantis*, the Fairfax MS and MS Huntington EL 26.A.17. Smith (1988b: 99) has further argued that Gower's authorial forms survive to an unusual extent in the various MSS of the poem, probably reflecting the particular *auctoritas* of the poet.

The present manuscript has, then, been subjected to three different analyses, based on essentially the same methodology: by Samuels for *LALME*, by Smith (1985) and by Okumura (1991). While the two former analyses were based on relatively small samples, Okumura's study covers the entire text. A fourth localization of the same text may seem superfluous; however, an independent analysis, following the guidelines set for the present study, will be required from the point of view of compatibility. However, as Okumura's analysis of the text is very thorough, a full-scale repetition seems unnecessary: accordingly, the present analysis is restricted to a relatively small sample.

The sample consists of *ca* 6200 lines, contained on fols 30-39, 80-89, 143-152 and 190-199, and amounting to *ca* 19 % of the entire text; used in conjunction with Okumura's material, it should be adequate for the present purpose.

Analysis

In *LALME*, LP 7450 was localized in the eastern part of central Herefordshire. Smith (1985) places the text in N Herefordshire, noting certain differences of usage between the two tranches analysed by him. The analysis by Okumura (1991: 35) shows that the forms for several items change in the middle of Book IV, around fol 83v; he suggests that the text is a composite one, reflecting a change of exemplar. The usage of the scribe himself is placed by Okumura (1991: 21) in E Herefordshire. He defines the scribe's behaviour as constrained selection, with a number of alien, probably authorial, forms retained; because of the latter, he classifies the language as a *Mischsprache* (1991: 49).

Smith (1985: 91 ff) and Okumura (1991: 20 ff) base their localizations of the scribe's usage largely on the same set of forms. The form *heo* 'she', together with <o> in words like *mon* 'man' and <uy>, <u> in words like *kuynde*, *furst* suggest a localization in the general SWML area. To delimit the area further, Smith maps out the forms *nouht* 'not', *thauh þauh* 'though' and *togadre* 'together', to indicate an area centering on NE Herefordshire; Okumura uses *nouht* 'not', *yen ien* 'eyes', *ax-* 'ask', *þau(g)h thaugh þou(g)h* 'though' and localizes the text in the general area of E Herefordshire.

Selecting the forms from the material collected for this study, and following the same guidelines as with the other texts, including the avoidance of very minor variants, the following set of forms may be considered for the present analysis:

ech(e 'each', *mochel* 'much', *mony* 'many', *eny* 'any', *thoru(g)h þoru(g)h* 'through', *or.. or* 'either.. or', *þen* 'than', *nouht* 'not', *a3ein* 'again(st)', *þo* 'then', *cherche* 'church', *soster* 'sister', *ax-* 'ask', *deide diede* 'died', *sye syh* 'saw', *riht* 'right', *mon* 'man', *con* 'can', *dradde* 'dreaded', *ferst* 'first', *dede* 'did', *stude stede* 'stead', *tuo* 'two', *heo* 'she', *ben* 'are', *mihte* 'might'

The forms *kuynde*, *furst*, *thauh þauh* and *togadre* used by Smith are excluded: while the *thauh þauh* type occurs throughout the text as a minor variant, the others occur only towards the beginning of the text. The forms *eche*, *eny*, *þo*, *dede* and *heo* suggest generally a southern or southwestern area, while *thoru(g)h*, *þen* and *ben* are untypical for the far South. The <o> spellings in *mon*, *con* limit the possible area to the West Midlands, excluding SW Herefordshire and all except N Gloucestershire. Within this area, the distributions of *mochel*, *nouht* and *stude* may be used to localize the text in a fairly limited area in E Herefordshire, corresponding on the geographical map roughly to the triangle Yarkhill - Bromyard - Ledbury; the localization is illustrated in Figure 36. Most forms listed above agree well with this area; the forms *or* ‘either’ and *syh* ‘saw’ are, however, untypical. These forms seem to reflect authorial usage, and will be discussed below.

The changes of usage described by Okumura affect the items ‘which’, ‘but’, ‘if’, ‘yet’ and ‘given’, which show a shift from the forms *wech(e)*, *bote*, *3ef*, *3et*, *3eue* to *which(e)*, *bot*, *3ifjff*, *3it*, *3iue*. To these may be added ‘the same’, which show a change from *þulke* to *pilke* at roughly the same point. A number of purely or mainly orthographical changes seem to follow approximately the same pattern. These changes are summarized in Figure 37 (p 195).

The forms exclusive to the first part form a regionally distinctive set. While the forms *wech(e)*, *3et*, *3eue* and *hit* agree with most SWML and WML areas, *bote*, *3ef* and *þulke* suggest a limited area consisting of E Herefordshire, W Worcestershire and the extreme north of Gloucestershire, and including the E Herefordshire area where the scribal usage shared throughout the text was localized (see Figure 36). This agrees with Okumura’s (1991: 42) view that ‘[t]he language of the first exemplar was very close to, if not exactly the same as, that of the scribe, and this enabled him to use such a dialectally homogeneous sort of language’.

The forms that occur in the second part only are in the main colourless, and give no particular clues as to the dialect of the exemplar. Okumura (1991:44) suggests that ‘the dialect of the second exemplar belongs to either the Central Midlands or the South, rather than the W Midlands’. However, it is doubtful whether the material justifies even such a general assumption: most forms are used in the W Midlands, and colourless

Figure 36

Localization of LP 7450



usage might result from translation out of any unfamiliar dialect.

While the text may be described as ‘composite’ in that it reflects underlying exemplars in different dialects, the differences are limited to a few items only, and most of the usage remains regular throughout. The text has clearly undergone a fairly thorough translation into the Herefordshire dialect; it was already noted by Macaulay (1900: cxi) that it contains numerous forms not found in the other manuscripts of the poem:

Item	Part 1	Part 2
WHICH	wech ((wheche))	which ((whiche))
THE SAME	pulke	pilke
THROUGH	thor(o)uh þor(o)uh þorwh	thorough (þorough)
BUT	bote	bot
IF	3ef	3if jf ((if))
THOUGH	þouh	þough (though)
YET	3et	3it
FLESH	flesch fleysch	fleissh fleiss
GIVE(N)	3eue 2	3iue 3 3iuen 2
IT	hit ((it))	it ((hit))

Figure 37: Differences between the earlier and later parts of LP 7450

The spelling is in most points like that of F, and it is usually good as regards terminations; but the scribe has some peculiarities of his own... as 'ho' for 'who', 'heo' for 'sche'... It must also be an individual fancy which leads him regularly to substitute 'som tyme' for 'whilom' wherever it occurs.

While most forms in the text agree with the localization of the scribe's dialect, a few forms cannot be reconciled with it. Okumura (1991: 25-26) classes the following as relicts:

or.. or 'either.. or', *hih(e hyhe* 'high', *sih syh* 'saw', *heeld* 'hold' (pa sg); reflexes of OE *y* as <e> (e g *ferst*, *senne*); syncopated present 3 sg forms (e g *stant*, *berp*, *spekp*)

Of these, only *or.. or* occurs as a main form throughout the text, and is indisputably an exotic form in the area. The high incidence of syncopated present 3 sg verb forms is also untypical: however, only the forms that involve non-dental stems (*berp*, *makp*, *spekp*), which are relatively rare in the text, are to be considered exotic usage (see p 344; see also Appendix 3, Item lists 251-52).

The relict status of the remaining forms is less straightforward. The doubling of <ee>, as in *heeld*, is not uncommon in Herefordshire texts; likewise, the spellings *hih(e hyhe* and *sih syh* may be seen as part of the general use of <h> in words like *riht*, *mihte* etc, itself a traditional feature in the Herefordshire material. Of the spellings with <e> for OE *y*, Okumura (1991: 25) notes that *ferst(e* 'first', *dede* 'did' and *besy* 'busy' are used as main forms in the text, while *hell* 'hill', *kesse* 'kiss' and *senne* 'sin' are used as minor variants; he considers all these spellings to be exclusively southeastern, and assigns them to a Gowerian stratum along with the forms discussed above. It should, however, be noted that all the regularly used forms are in fact common in the SWML area, and *ferst(e*, *dede* and *besy* occur as main forms in several Herefordshire texts (see Appendix 3, Item lists 151, 162, 166). The <e> spellings that occur as minor variants only, of which the present material includes *kende* 'kind', *ken* 'kin', *senne* 'sin', *keste* 'kissed',

are, on the other hand, exceptional in the area and may be classed as relicts. The forms *meri* ‘merry’, *merþe* ‘mirth’, *euele* ‘evil’, *stede* ‘stead’ and *smelle* ‘smell’ are, of course, common in most parts of the country.

Most of the regularly used forms listed by Okumura as Gowerian relicts may, then, be fitted into the scribe’s repertoire, while only a small number of minor variants are clearly alien to the area. Apart from the <e>-spellings in a few words like *kende*, *keste*, and syncopated present 3 sg forms like *berþ*, *makþ*, *spekþ*, these may be considered to include sporadic forms like *al-þaugh* ‘though’ and *nor* ‘nor’. Occasional spellings like *hiere* ‘hear’ and *lief* (OE *leof*) also seem to retain a distinctive Gowerian *ie* for /e:/ (Samuels and Smith 1981 [1988]: 16).

While actual relict usage thus seems to be confined to minor variants, the text contains a large number of forms that belong to Gowerian usage as defined by Macaulay (1900) and Samuels and Smith (1981 [1988]), while agreeing with the present localization:

eny ‘any’, *bot* ‘but’ (2nd part only), *sehuer* ‘silver’, *soster* ‘sister’, *fleiss* ‘flesh’ (2nd part only), *hih(e hyhe* ‘high’ (minor variant), *syh sih* ‘saw’ (mainly 2nd part), *riht* ‘right’, *þong* ‘thank’ (single occurrence), *ferst* ‘first’, *dede* ‘did’, *tuo* ‘two’, *-lich(e* ‘-ly’ (minor variants), *ous* ‘us’, pr part *-ende* (minor variant), *mihte* ‘might’.

All these forms may be fitted into a NE Herefordshire scribe’s repertoire. However, their connection with Gower suggests that they go back to authorial usage. Smith (1988b: 99) has shown that scribes copying Gower tend to retain authorial forms, presumably because of a particular *auctoritas* attached to them; he suggests that ‘[Gower’s] authoritative status attached itself even to the archetypal spellings of the Gower tradition’. Against this background, it seems that a certain degree of caution will be necessary when using the material as evidence: while the scribal usage generally seems to represent the usage of a clearly delimited area, the scribe appears to work within relatively broad constraints, and the reproduced authorial forms may to some extent skew the localization.

The second part contains a much greater number of Gowerian forms than the first. It was suggested by Macaulay (1900: cxl), on the basis of textual correspondences, that the latter part of the text was copied from an exemplar very similar to MS Fairfax 3; as the latter is considered to show a usage very close to Gower's own, the greater proportion of Gowerian forms, together with the much less pronounced SWML character, would seem to agree very well with this suggestion.

Finally, a small group of forms typical for the SWML area occur only at the beginning; these include *kuynde*, *furst* and *togadre*, *heore* 'her/their' and *pruide pruyde* 'pride'. Okumura (1991: 37-38) is probably right in assuming that 'they are our scribe's own forms rather than the relict forms of the first exemplar'; however, as they clearly belong to a stretch of transfer usage, they should not be treated as part of the regular usage of the text.

As the usage contained in the two parts of LP 7450 is not identical, it might be argued that the parts should be considered separately. A division seems, however, unnecessary for the present purpose: the usage clearly reflects the repertoire of a single scribe, and may be localized fairly precisely; the changes concern a limited number of items only, and do not affect the localization. The text may thus be treated as a single informant.

The presence of Gowerian forms limits the usefulness of the text somewhat. The minor variant forms that are clearly incompatible with Herefordshire usage should, of course, be excluded. As regards the large number of authorial forms that agree with the localization, the possible skewing effect of broad scribal constraints should be taken into account (see p 37). The text is, accordingly, not entirely suitable for use as first-rate evidence. However, those strongly dialectal forms that occur throughout the text, and cannot be attributed to a Gowerian tradition, may well be used as evidence for the dialect of NE Herefordshire.

4.2.12 New Testament translation: LP 7460

7460 Cambridge, Selwyn College 108 L.1, fols 1-28v, 31r-85r; s xiv/xv (*LALME* 7460)

The manuscript consists of 139 folios and contains part of the New Testament in English.

The text includes the following items:

fols 1r - 12v	Prologue (incomplete)
13r - 19v	1-2 Peter
20r - 24r	James
24r - 29v	1-3 John
30r - 31r	Jude
31r - 32r	Introduction to Pauline epistles
32r - 85r	Pauline epistles
85v - 133r	Acts of the Apostles
133r - 139r	Matthew 1:1 - 6:13

The manuscript is probably the work of a single scribe throughout (Ker 1969; but cf Paues 1904: xi). The hand is a textura with some anglicana forms, and varies in size. The text is corrected throughout by a different hand, and chapter numbers and headings were added in the fifteenth century. A break in the text between the two first quires (between fols 12 and 13) suggests that at least one quire of text has been lost. All the texts, except the Acts, were edited by Paues (1904); this edition was used for the *LALME* analysis of the text, which was based on the Prologue and the Pauline epistles.

The New Testament translations are roughly contemporary with, but unrelated to, the so-called Wycliffite bible translations. All the texts appear in other manuscripts, one of which, MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 434, seems to be a corrected copy of the present manuscript. The texts occur together only in these two manuscripts, and

seem to go back to more than one original translation (see Paues 1904: x).

The linguistic usage varies between the different parts. According to Paues (1904: xii), the Prologue, Peter, James, 1 John and the Pauline epistles, are written in a 'southern' dialect of mainly southwestern character, while 2-3 John, Jude, the Acts and Matthew, show a usage characterized as 'Midland with a more or less strong intermixture of Southern forms'. The latter texts contain traces of northern or North-Midland usage, which Paues assumes to be indicative of a northern origin. Of the 'southern' group, Paues (1904: lxvii) argues that 'the text... does not present an absolutely pure dialect; its chief character is... shown to be South-Western, the deviating forms being either due to the scribes or indicative of a Kentish original'.

A detailed study of the entire manuscript is not possible within the scope of the present work, and the analysis will focus on the 'southern' group, localized in Herefordshire. There seem to be no significant differences in usage between the parts analysed in *LALME* and the other 'southern' texts (Peter, James, 1 John and the introduction to the Pauline Epistles); the latter are therefore included in the present analysis. In order to assess the scribe's behaviour, some study of the other texts will be of interest; for this purpose, the stretches containing 2-3 John and Jude (fols 28v - 31r), and Matthew (133r-139r) are also considered. The analysis is based partly on Paues' edition (1904), partly on a microfilm supplied by Cambridge University Library.

Analysis

The differences in linguistic usage within the manuscript are mostly clear-cut and coincide with the literary items; it thus seems likely that they reflect the usage of the exemplar(s). They do not, however, suggest a *literatim* copyist. The majority of items show regular usage throughout the manuscript, including the following distinctive forms:

whuche 'which', *muche myche* 'much', *þoro3* 'through', *a3eyn* 'against',
whan 'when', *churche* 'church', *3efe 3eue* 'give', *seyde* 'said', *þei* 'they',
pr part *-enge*, *bep* 'are', *schulde* 'should', *han haue hafe* 'have'

These forms co-occur only in one fairly limited area, covering most of Worcestershire, E Herefordshire and, possibly, W Warwickshire; this general localization is shown on Figure 38, using the two forms with the narrowest distributions, *whuche* and *han*. These forms may be assumed to reflect the scribe's own usage.

Some thirty items show marked differences between the different parts; a selection is given in Figure 39. The 'southern texts', i.e. the Prologue, Peter, James, I John and the Pauline Epistles, are denoted by S1; the text of 2-3 John and Jude by S2, and Matthew by S3. The most marked differences are between S1 and S3, with S2 showing features agreeing with both. The differences seem mainly to involve degrees of dialectal colouring: the language of S3, where it deviates from S1, is largely colourless. Apart from a small number of forms in S3 (*vnto* 'until', *nor* 'nor', *þer* 'their'), none of the three parts contains forms that stand out as directly incompatible with the usage of the SWML area. This also indicates constrained selection, not *literatim* copying, on the part of the scribe.

In *LALME*, LP 7460 was localized in NE Herefordshire, corresponding roughly to the Bromyard area on the geographical map. The following forms, which occur more or less regularly throughout the text, may be used for localization:

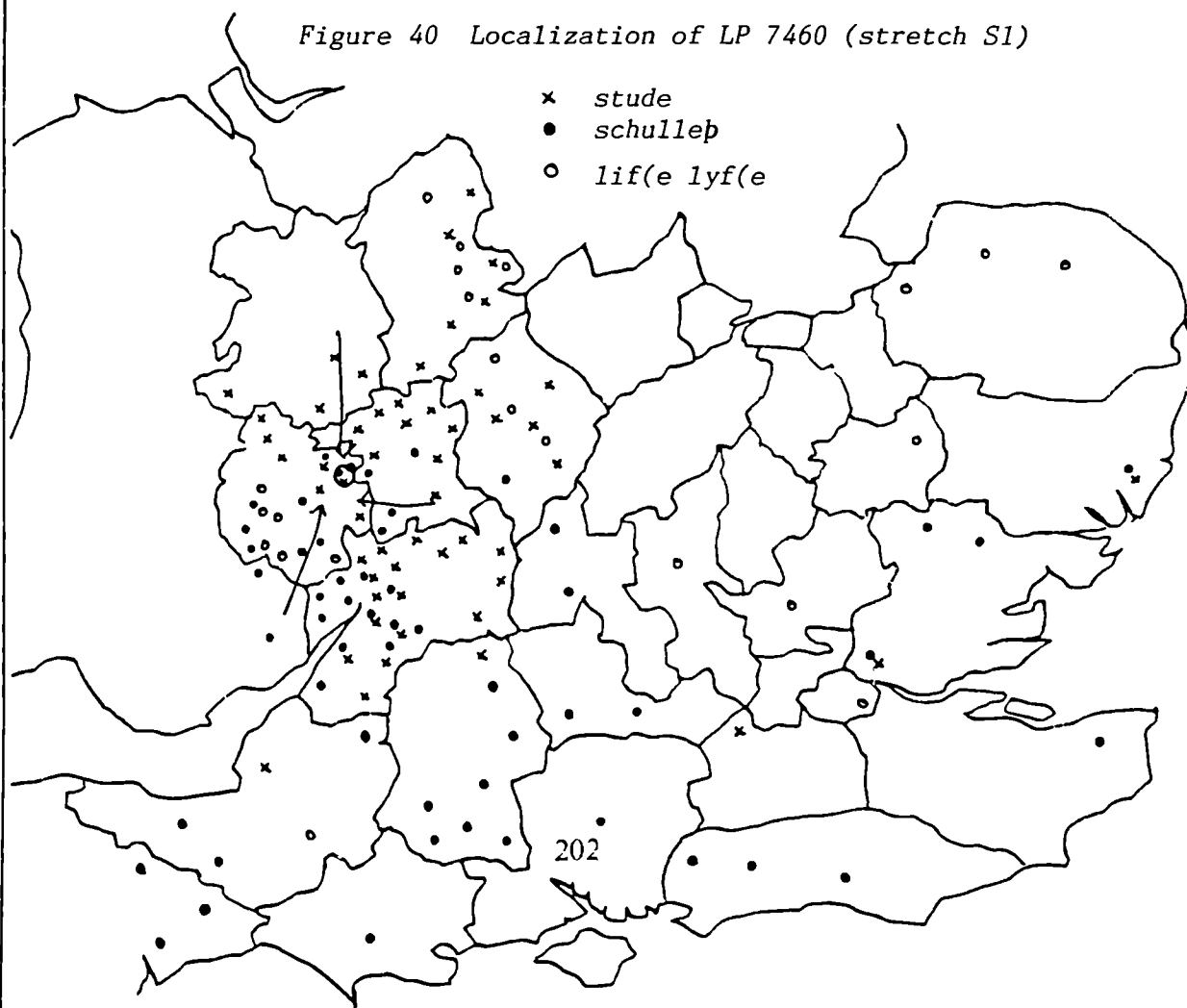
whuche 'which', *muchē* 'much', *eny* 'any', *þoro3* 'through', *bote* 'but',
3ef 'if', *oper* 'or', *a3eyn* 'again', *þo* 'then', *dyed* 'died', *pruyde* 'pride',
fuyr 'fire', *furst* 'first', *dude* 'did', *stude* 'stead', *y)seo* 'see', *-lyche* '-ly',
ich 'I', *heo* 'she', *hure* 'their', *beþ* 'are', *schuleþ schulleþ* 'shall' (pl),
schuld- 'should', *han* 'have', *lyfe(n)* 'live'

The forms *muchē* and *eny*, together with the spellings with <u>, <uy> for OE /y(:)/ and with <eo> in *y)seo*, *heo*, limit the area to the west or southwest. The forms *þoro3*, *a3eyn*, *schuld* and *han* exclude all of Gloucestershire except the extreme north. A number of forms provide a northern limit, including *whuche*, *þoro3*, *bote*, *oper*, *þo*, *beþ* and, most narrowly, *schul(l)ep*; together with *han*, these forms limit the possible localization to E Herefordshire and a small part of central Worcestershire. Finally, the distribution of *stude* excludes all except the extreme east of Herefordshire, while the *lyfe*

Figure 38 Localization of the shared element in
MS Selwyn College 108 L.1



Figure 40 Localization of LP 7460 (stretch S1)



Item	S1	S2	S3
FROM	from ((fro))	fro	fro
BUT	bote ((but))	bote (but)	but
IF	3ef 3if	3ef	if (3if)
UNTIL	forto forte	-	tul vnto to
OR	oþer	-	or
NOR	ne	ne	nor
NOT	no3t ((not))	not ((no3t))	not ((no3t))
THANK	þonk- (þank-)	-	þanke
GAVE	3ef (3af)	-	3af
FIRE	fuyr	fuyr fyre	fyre
DID	dude ((dyde))	dyde	dide
EVIL	efel (yuel) ((yfel))	yuel(e	yuel(e
-LY	-lyche	-ly	-ly
I	y ich ((j ych))	y ((ych))	j
SHE	heo ((he))	-	sche
THEIR	hure ((hire here))	here (þer)	here þer
<i>pr pl</i>	-eþ	-eþ (-en)	-en ((-eþ))
<i>pa part</i>	y- ((0-))	0- ((y-))	0-
ARE	beþ ((ben))	beþ ((ben))	beþ ben
SHALL <i>pl</i>	schuleþ <i>etc</i>	schul schulen	schal
WILL	wole	wole	wyle

Figure 39: Differences between parts of MS Selwyn College 108 L. 1.

lyfe(n) type would seem to exclude Worcestershire. The most likely localization would seem to be in E Herefordshire, corresponding roughly to the Bromyard area. This is illustrated in Figure 40, using the forms *stude*, *schulleþ* and *lyfe(n)*.

The text contains a relatively large amount of variation, mainly confined to minor variants alongside main forms. The variants consist most often of predictable permutations, like *þorow3 þorow þorou3 3orou3* alongside the main form *þoro3* ‘through’, or of forms that commonly occur in variation in the area, e.g. *eny any* ‘any’, *efel yuel* ‘evil’ and *y ich* ‘I’. Even in cases of the latter type, one form is usually dominant.

The proportions of variants generally stay more or less stable throughout the text. However, two items, ‘if’ and ‘but’, show considerable fluctuations in relative frequency. In both parts of the S1 text (the stretch from the Prologue to 1 John, and the Pauline Epistles respectively), *3if* predominates to begin with, but gradually gives way to *3ef*. Similarly, *but* occurs alongside *bote* towards the beginning of both parts, but later disappears. The S2 stretch shows mixed usage and cannot be relied on as evidence; however, S3 uses *but* and *if 3if* throughout. As these latter forms are thus demonstrably acceptable to the scribe, being retained throughout a text of some length, it is likely that *bote* and *3ef* reflect the usage of the exemplar of S1, also acceptable to the scribe, and that the drift, as far as these two items are concerned, thus goes towards a more *literatim* copying.

The text contains a number of minor variants that, together with *bote* and *3ef* would seem to give an indication about the dialect of the exemplar: so *þo3* ‘though’, *hwo* ‘who’, *maked* ‘made’, *nome* ‘name’, *ber* ‘bear’ (vb pasg), *wes* ‘was’, *sun* ‘sin’. These forms seem to reflect a very conservative SWML usage, localizable in the N Herefordshire - S Shropshire area. They form a dialectally coherent set, which is very likely to represent the usage of the exemplar of S1: it may be assumed that the forms *bote* and *3ef* were acceptable to the scribe, although not, perhaps, his active forms, whereas the other forms did not belong to his repertoire, and appear only as occasional relicts.

Another, smaller, group of minor variants contains forms that might suggest an element of the so-called Central Midland Standard (see pp 41-42): so *syche* ‘such’,

myche ‘much’, *ony* ‘any’, *for-3ouen* ‘forgiven’. Of these, only *myche* agrees with a SWML localization. Apart from such sporadic forms, which should be discarded as evidence, all forms contained in the text seem to fit well into the NE Herefordshire area.

Paues’ view that the S1 text presents a mixture of a predominant South-Western layer and ‘deviating’ Kenticisms is based on assumptions about dialectal distributions that are not supported by the *LALME* evidence. The ‘Kentish’ forms cited by her are, for the most part, well attested in the Herefordshire area: so <e> in words like *yberyed* ‘buried’, *efel* ‘evil’, *stere* ‘stir’; <o> in *ponke*, *ponkynges*, *dronk*; the sporadic spelling <by> for ‘be’, and the forms *branneþ*, *ybrand* ‘burn(t)’ (see Paues 1904: xxxiii-lxvii). The <e> spellings of ‘bury’, ‘evil’ and ‘stir’ are common in most parts of the county, while the other types are at least as typical for the SWML area as for Kent. There is, accordingly, no reason to assume any non-SWML element in S1, apart from the sporadic CMS forms noted above.

As the scribe demonstrably produces a constrained usage, it will be of interest to consider briefly the other parts of the manuscript copied by him. It was noted above that the S2 stretch seems to contain a mixture of the forms used in the longer S1 and S3 stretches; considering the shortness of the text, this is likely to represent transfer, or working-in, usage, and does not provide reliable evidence. The usage of S3, on the other hand, differs clearly from that of S1. Most forms that differ from the S1 usage show no regional colouring: so *I*, *sche*, *fro*, *or*, *if*, *not*, *her(e)*, *hille*, *dide*, *wyle*, *firste*, *-ly*. The material contains a few forms alien to the SWML area; these include *per þer* ‘their’, *vnto to* ‘until’ and *nor* ‘nor’. The northern character of these forms may be related to the markedly Scandinavian lexical items present in S3, e.g. *gretynge* ‘weeping’, *slekked* ‘slaked’ and *having* ‘pregnant’. Together, these features might be taken to suggest that the Matthew translation originated in the North Midland area.

The colourless character of S3 thus probably reflects constrained selection by a SWML scribe copying from a northern dialect. It may be noted that the forms shared by S1 and S3 (see p 201) include a number of items that would show markedly different forms in a northern dialect: so ‘which’, ‘much’, ‘church’ and ‘give’; forms like *whilk* would fall outside a SWML scribe’s repertoire, and would be likely to be translated by him, while forms like *sche*, *if*, *hille* would be regionally widespread and easily acceptable.

The S2 and S3 stretches, containing mixed and colourless usage respectively, are obviously unsuitable as dialect evidence for the present study. The S1 stretch, however, contains a strongly regional usage that is localizable with some precision, and should provide excellent evidence. However, as it was suggested that this part was copied from an exemplar in a more conservative, and somewhat more northern, dialect, it is possible that the scribe's constraints might skew the localization somewhat; this should be taken into consideration when appropriate.

4.2.13 Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*: LP 7500

7500 London, British Library Harley 201, fols 4-51; s xv 1/4 (*LALME* 7500)

The manuscript consists of 161 folios and contains Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*. The text is the work of two scribes, responsible for fols 4-51 and 52-161 respectively. The usage of the first scribe (A) forms the basis of the Herefordshire LP 7500, and will be the main concern here; that of the second scribe (B) was localized in Gloucestershire and appears as LP 7080 in *LALME*. Both hands are slightly uneven anglicana ones; although similar in appearance, they are easily distinguished by differences in letter form (e.g. those for **d**, **e**, **k**); the linguistic usage also changes markedly between fols 51 and 52. The text of the poem is incomplete, breaking off at line 9529. In the portion copied by the first scribe, fols 31 and 32 have changed places in the binding, as have fols 33 and 34; on the present fol 31r, a later hand has noted this change. Marginal scribbles are otherwise few.

Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* survives in two versions, a longer and shorter one (of ca 12 000 and 10 000 lines respectively); they survive in seven manuscripts each, most of which are of the fifteenth century. The earliest surviving manuscript, MS BL Cotton Caligula A xi, represents the long version and is dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth century (Hartung XXI: 2798). The two versions are identical up to the death

of Henry I (1135). It is likely that the poem was produced by more than one author, and a version of the shared part may go back to an early date; however, the longer version in its surviving form has been dated, on internal evidence, to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and may not predate MS Caligula A xi very much (Hartung XXI: 2617-18; Bennett and Smithers 1968: 158-59).

The present text was edited in 1724 by Hearne; this edition was used for the *LALME* analysis. The present analysis is based on a microfilm of the entire manuscript supplied by the British Library, and covers the A stretch (fols 4-51) in its entirety.

Analysis

LP 7500 was localized in *LALME* in NE Herefordshire, corresponding on the geographical map roughly to an area between Leominster and Bromyard. While the usage differs considerably from that of the B stretch, the two usages share a large number of distinctive features, suggesting that they may have been copied from the same exemplar, or from closely related ones. The usage of hand B (LP 7080) is very similar to that of the fourteenth-century MS Caligula A xi, which was used as the basis for LP 7100 in *LALME*. The three usages are compared in Figure 41.²⁶

The only differences between the forms of MS Caligula A xi and the B stretch, as shown in the table, involve the forms for ‘such’, ‘man’, ‘their’ and ‘them’; in all these, B agrees with A. On the other hand, the Caligula forms *hor* and *hom* occur as relicts both in A and B. These and other relicts in A, which will be discussed in more detail below, suggest that both the A and B stretches are likely to have been copied from an exemplar containing a usage virtually identical to that of the Caligula MS.

The following distinctive forms are shared by all three texts:

ech(e ‘each’, *wuch*(e ‘which’, *much*(e ‘much’, *eny* ‘any’, *poru* ‘through’, *ac* ‘but’, *pei* ‘though’, *oper* ‘or’, *po* ‘then’, *barn-* ‘burn’, *wat* ‘what’, *fur* ‘fire’, *lute*(l ‘little’, *dude* ‘did’, *vuel*(e ‘evil’, *stude* ‘stead’, *huld* ‘held’, *-liche* ‘-ly’, *ich/ych* ‘I’, *is ys* ‘his’, *heo* ‘she’, *w-* ‘wh-’, *deide deyde* ‘died’

Item	MS Caligula A xi (LP 7100)	Scribe B (LP 7080)	Scribe A (LP 7500)
SUCH	suich(e)	such(e)	such(e)
THE SAME	þulke	þulke	þilke
FROM	fram	fram	from
BUT	bote	bote	bute
SINCE	supþe	supþe	seþþe
ERE	ar	ar	er > ar
YET	3ut	3ut	3et
AGAIN	a3en	a3en	a3eyn
WHILE	wule	wyle > wule	while wyle
CLEPE	clup-	clup-	clep-
DIED	deide	deyde	dyede > deide
HEAR	hur-	hur-	her-
MAN	man	man (mon)	mon
HAD	adde	adde	hadde
SAID	sede	sede	seide (seyde)
FIRST	verste	verst(e)	first(e)
TWO	tueye tueie	tueye	twai
THEY	hii	hij	heo
THEIR	hor	her	here
THEM	hom	hem ((hym))	hem
SHOULD	ssolde	ssolde	schulde

Figure 41: Comparison between linguistic forms in the Caligula A xi text of Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle and the two hands of MS Harley 201

The shared element can be localized in the core SWML area, excluding the western border areas. The four most limited distributions, those of *þoru*, *lute(l)*, *vuel* and *huld*, co-occur in the *LALME* material only in an area comprising the extreme east of Herefordshire, most of Worcestershire and the N half of Gloucestershire; this area is shown on Figure 42, using the distributions of *þoru* and *vuel*.

Where the forms differ between A on the one hand and B and MS Caligula A xi on the other, the two groups contrast sharply in regional character, the forms being typical for the northern and southern parts of the SWML area respectively. The following regularly used forms occur in A only:

muchel ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *3ef* ‘if’, *seþþe* ‘since’, *er* ‘ere’, *ny* ‘nor’, *3et* ‘yet’, *a3eyn* ‘again(st)’, *mon* ‘man’, *onswer-* ‘answer’, *wes* ‘was’, *heo* ‘they’, *heore* ‘their’, *schulleþ* ‘shall’ (pl), *schulde* ‘should’

The usage of A also contains a large number of more or less colourless forms, which correspond to strongly dialectal, southern forms in B: so *bute* ‘but’, *þilke* ‘the same’, *from*, *self*, *to-gedere* ‘together’, *þider* ‘thither’, *while*, *clep-* ‘call’, *here* ‘hear’, *seide* ‘said’ against *bote*, *þulke*, *fram*, *sulf*, *to-gadere*, *þuder*, *wule*, *clup-*, *hure*, *sede*. The more distinctive forms in A may be mapped out to localize the scribe’s usage. The forms *mon*, *onswer-* and *wes* indicate the West Midland area excluding SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire, while the forms *a3eyn* and *schulde* exclude all but the extreme north of the latter county. Within the remaining area, the forms *ny*, *heo* and *schulleþ* limit the area to a part of NE Herefordshire, corresponding roughly to the Bromyard area, or possibly to the immediately adjoining part of central Worcestershire. This localization, using the forms *wes*, *heo* and *schulleþ*, is shown in Figure 43.

The usage of A is generally very regular, most items showing a single main form. There is, however, a considerable number of occasional variants. The majority fall into two distinct groups, both of which are interesting with regard to the relationship between A and the other two texts.

Figure 42 Localization of the shared element between the two hands of MS Harley 201 (LPs 7500 and 7080)

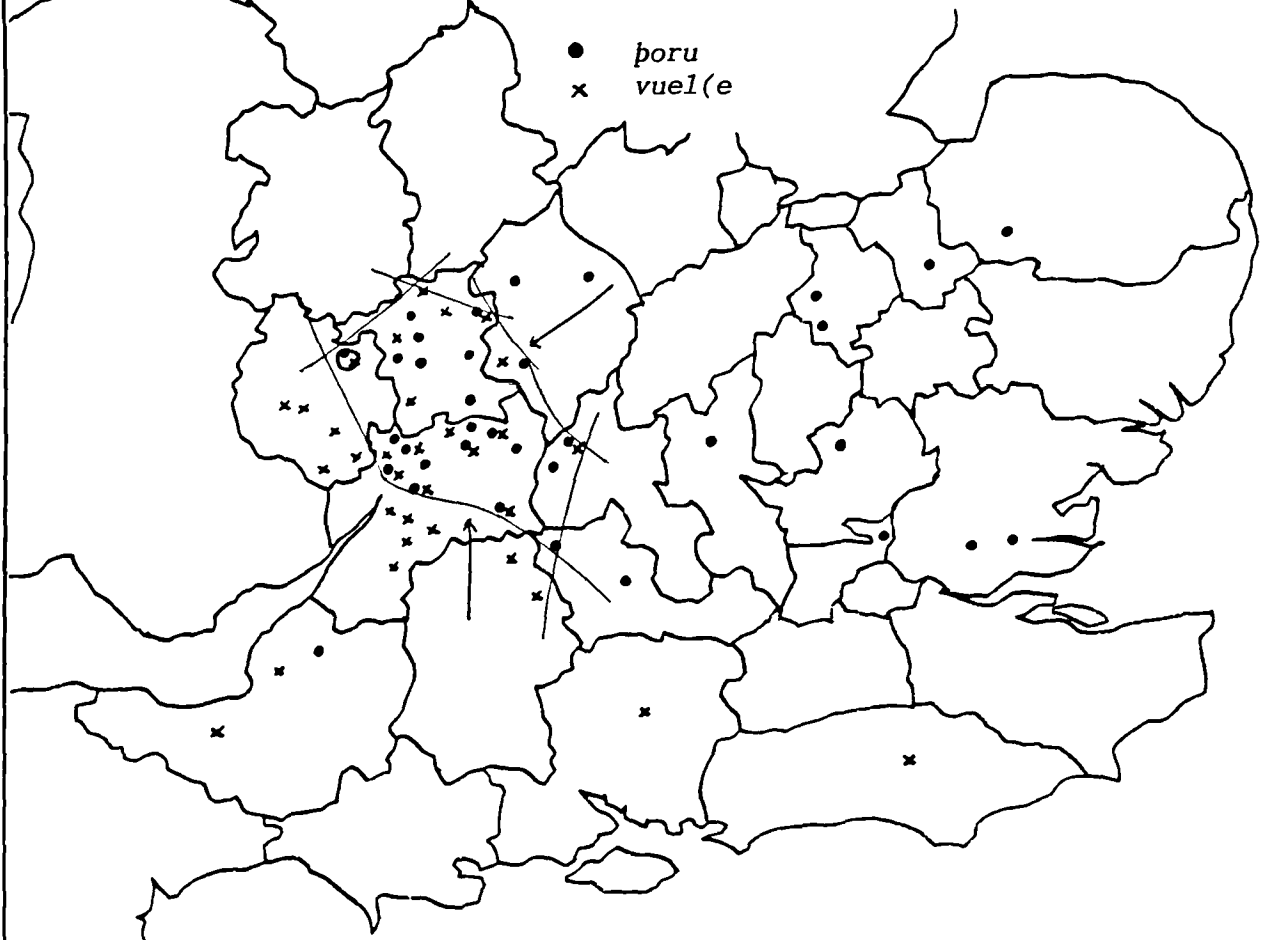
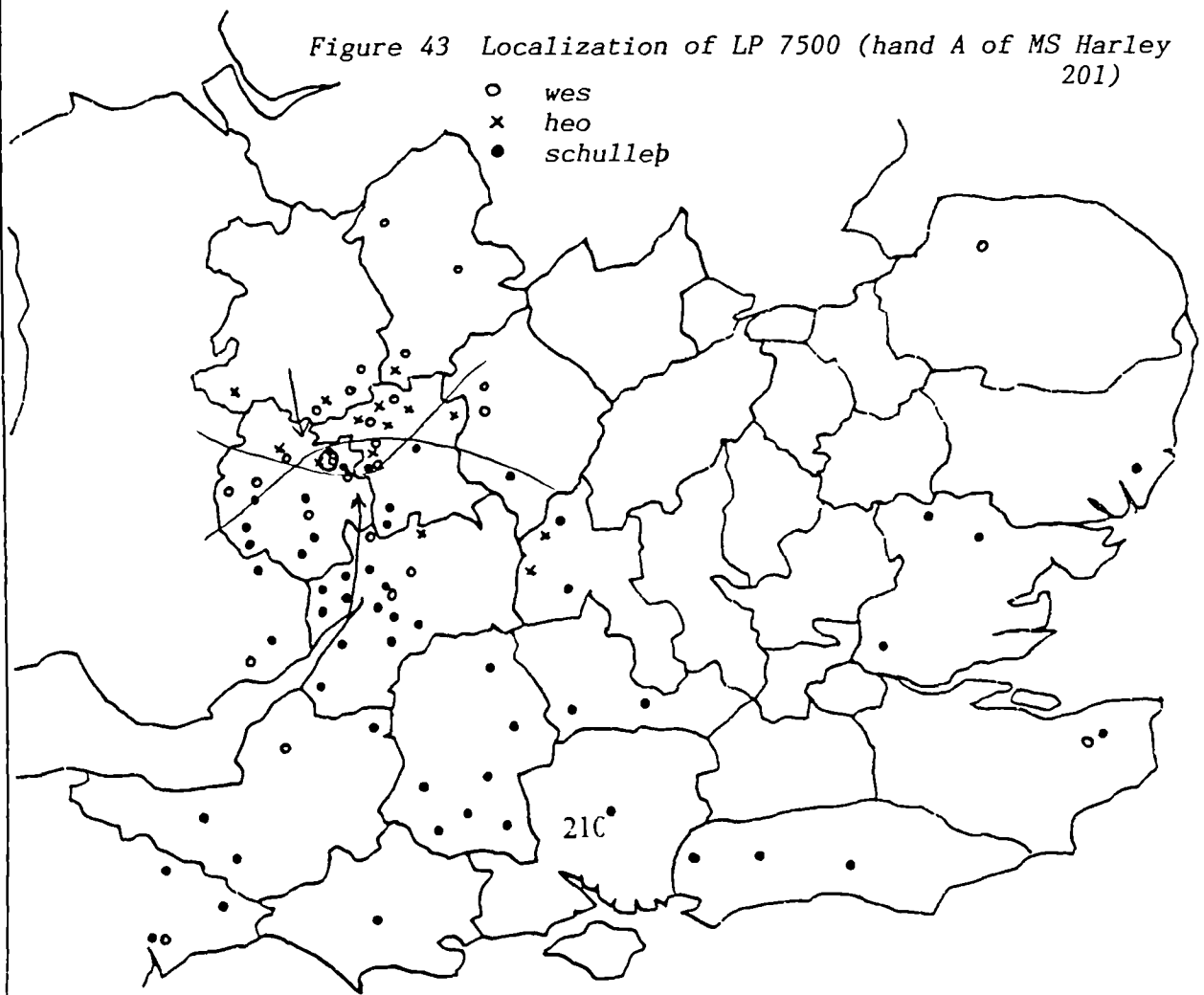


Figure 43 Localization of LP 7500 (hand A of MS Harley 201)



A large group of relict forms, most of which occur once or twice only, are identical to the main forms of B (and, as far as the data goes, MS Caligula A xi):

fram ‘from’, *bote* ‘but’, *ar* ‘ere’, *3ut* ‘yet’, *a3en* ‘again(st)’, *to-gadere* ‘together’,
wule ‘while’, *hurde* ‘heard’, *hij* ‘they’, *scholde* ‘should’

While some of these forms, e g *scholde*, might reasonably fit into the area where the scribe’s regular usage was localized, most would be marginal, and as a group they suggest a more southern localization, centring on Gloucestershire. It seems likely that they represent the usage of the exemplar, and that the A scribe has normally translated them, substituting forms more acceptable to him, i e *from*, *bute*, *er*, *3et*, *a3eyn* etc.

Another group of relicts contains forms that occur neither in B or in the extract from MS Caligula A xi, and that are clearly more northern:

vche ‘each’, *pike pikke* ‘the same’, *por3 porþ* ‘through’, *þen* ‘than’, *þaw þa3*
‘though’, *þenne* ‘then’, *when* ‘when’, *dredde* ‘dreaded’

The form *dyede* ‘died’, used only in the early part of the text, may also be included here. While the distribution boundaries for *þen*, *þenne* and *when* are fuzzy in the western part of the country, the forms in <e> generally suggest a more northern usage. The other forms have narrower distributions; in particular, the distributions of *pik(k)e* and *þa3* center on an area just north of that suggested by the regular forms in the text (see Maps 10, 20 in Appendix 4). These forms probably reflect scribe A’s active usage, which slips through occasionally, even though he in general uses the forms *eche*, *þilke*, *þoru*, *þan*, *þei*, *þanne*, *wan* and *dradde*, all of which, except *þilke*, follow the usage of B and, presumably, of the exemplar.

Finally, it may be noted that the rare forms *hor hore* ‘their’ and *hom* ‘them’, which occur as relicts in A, agree with the regular usage of MS Caligula A xi, but not of B, where *hom* likewise appears as a relict. This suggests that both texts were copied from an exemplar similar in linguistic usage to the Caligula text.

It thus seems that scribe A's own dialectal usage belongs to the NE Herefordshire area shown in Figure 43, or possibly somewhat further north, and that he copied from an exemplar in a more southern dialect, similar or identical to that contained in MS Caligula A xi. His choice of forms seems to be constrained within a narrowly regional repertoire: he retains no forms that would be entirely alien to a NE Herefordshire dialect (e g *sede* 'said', *puder* 'thither' in B and the Caligula text) and, for the most part, translates forms that would be untypical or marginal (e g *3ut* 'yet', *a3en* 'again(st)', *scholde* 'should'); however, he retains forms that are acceptable, even though his own preferred forms might be different (e g *eche* 'each', *poru* 'through'). While the translation partly favours colourless forms (e g *from*, *self*, *while*) he also introduces strongly dialectal N Herefordshire forms like *mon* 'man', *wes* 'was' and *heo* 'they'.

Two items show a gradual change within the stretch: *er* 'ere' is replaced by *ar* and *dyede* 'died' by *deide*. In both cases, the latter form agrees with B and the Caligula text. It may be assumed that the direction of the drift is towards the usage of the exemplar, and probably reflects the gradual familiarization of the scribe with some marginally acceptable forms.

The text copied by scribe A would, on the whole, seem to provide excellent material for dialect study. While its usage is to some extent conditioned by the exemplar, it is at the same time strongly local: the scribe does not simply replace forms that fall outwith his constraints with colourless ones, but actively translates into his own regional usage; hence the usage can be localized fairly precisely in an area clearly different from that of its postulated exemplar.

A brief look at the usage of scribe B will, finally, be of interest. The close similarity noted above between this and MS Caligula A xi is reinforced by the examples given by Anne Hudson (1966: *passim*), which suggest that the agreement of B with the Caligula text is more consistent than in the case of any other copies of the long version.²⁷ The following list shows distinctive forms that occur in B, but not in A:

pulke 'the same', *fram* 'from', *bote* 'but', *3yf* 'if', *suppe* 'since', *vorte* 'until', *3ut* 'yet', *a3en* 'again(st)', *sulf* 'self', *to-gadere* 'together', *puder* 'thither', *wule* 'while', *fless* 'flesh', *chup-* 'call', *hur-* 'hear', *adde* 'had',

sede ‘said’, *verst vorst* ‘first’, *vale* ‘OE fela’, *wurp* ‘worth’, *tueye* ‘two’,
hij ‘they’, *ssolde* ‘should’, *abbe* ‘have’, *wuste* ‘knew’

Several forms, including *pulke*, *fram*, *sulf*, *hur-* and *hij* are attested over most of the southern counties from S Herefordshire in the west to S Essex in the east. The form *clup-* has a more limited distribution, occurring only in the extreme SE of Herefordshire and the counties to the south; on the other hand, *bote* occurs regularly only in Herefordshire, E Worcestershire and N Gloucestershire. Together, these forms limit the localization of B to an area comprising N Gloucestershire and the extreme south of Worcestershire (see Figure 44). The overlap with the shared forms concentrates the localization to the parts of N Gloucestershire along the lower Severn (see Figure 45). All these forms also seem to occur in MS Caligula A xi.

On the whole, it would seem likely that the B text is the result of more or less faithful *literatim* copying from an exemplar containing a usage very closely related to that of the much earlier Caligula text. The scribe himself may or may not have belonged to the Gloucester area; it is even possible, in the light of the manuscript connection, that he belonged to the same area as the A scribe, and simply had a different copying method. A more thorough comparison of the texts would, of course, be needed; however, on the strength of the present evidence, it seems possible that B in fact reflects an early or mid-fourteenth-century state of language more than an early fifteenth-century one. This consideration is also to some extent relevant to the language of A, which was probably copied from the same exemplar. However, as the A scribe has been shown to translate the text fairly thoroughly, it is likely that any form he retains is familiar and acceptable to him. Some features of A may, still, be archaic for the early fifteenth century; this should be taken into consideration when using the text as evidence.

Figure 44 Localization of LP 7080 (hand B of MS Harley

201)

- bote
- clup-
- x hii hij

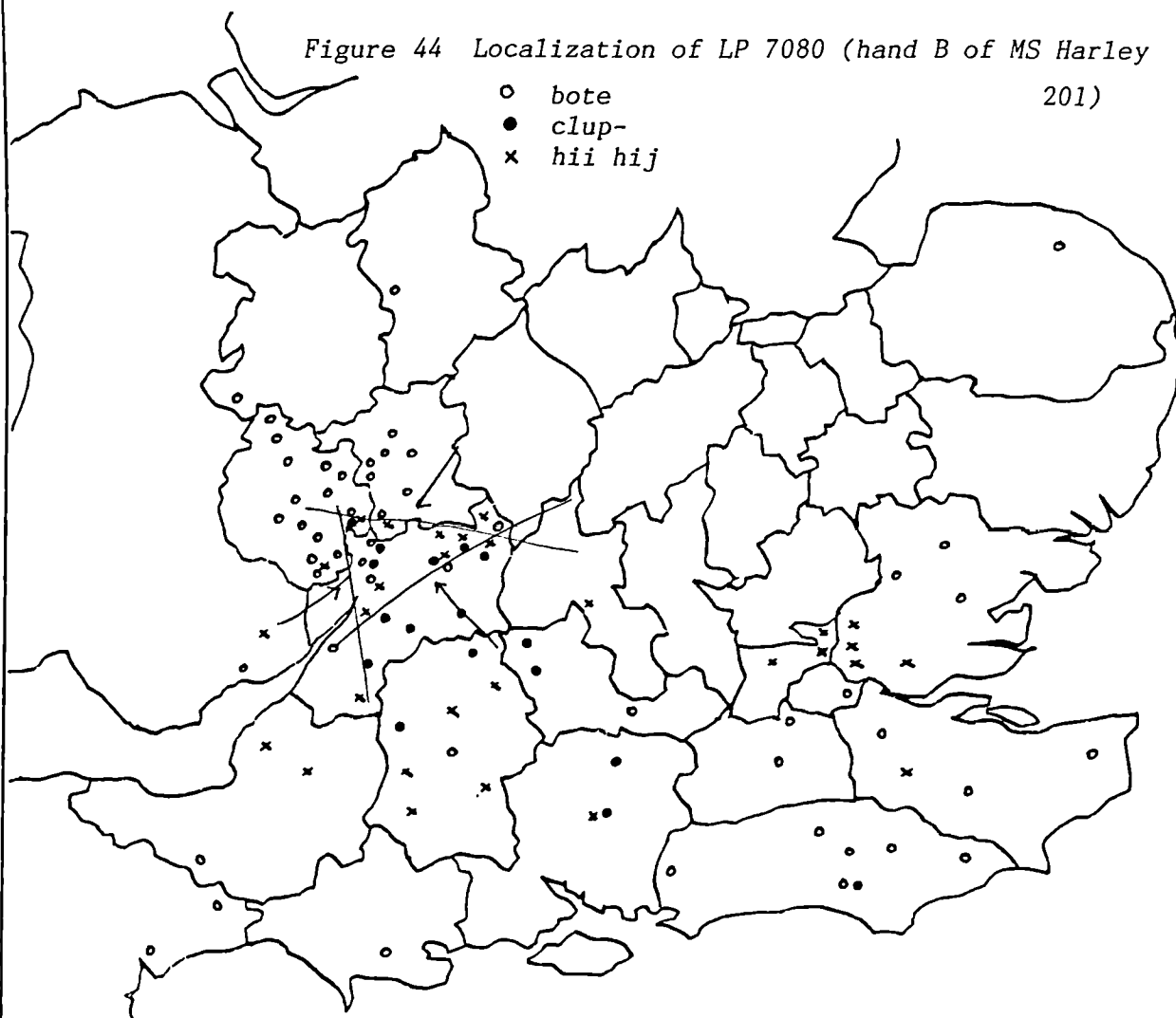
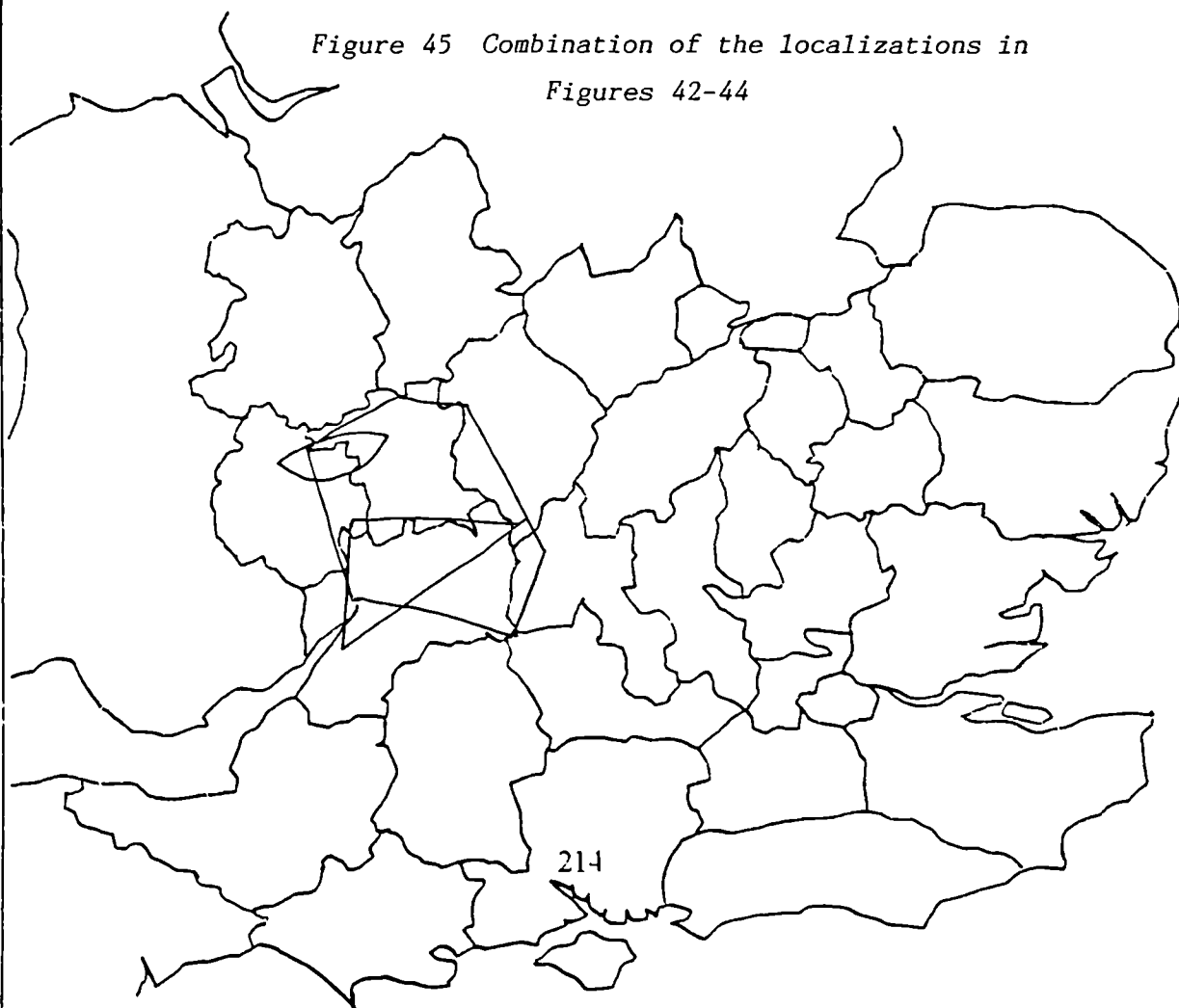


Figure 45 Combination of the localizations in
Figures 42-44



4.2.14 Two northern Herefordshire texts: LPs 7510 and 7520

The two northernmost texts in the *LALME* Herefordshire material, LPs 7510 and 7520, contain very similar linguistic usage, and should be considered together. The two texts are first analysed separately, after which their usages are compared.

7510 Oxford, St John's College 6, fols 1-134; s xv 3/4 (*LALME* LP 7510)

The manuscript consists of 134 folios, and contains Lydgate's *Troy Book*. The text is copied by a single scribe, writing a neat anglicana formata; the manuscript is of octavo size. The text of the poem is complete, except for the last 174 lines of the Prologue and the first 49 lines of Book I, on an original second folio now lost; as it stands, the text runs to more than 29,800 lines (Bergen 1935: 36). The *Troy Book* survives in twenty-three manuscripts, and has been edited by Bergen (1906 - 1935), from MS Cotton Augustus A iv. The present manuscript is connected with the Leinthall family of northern Herefordshire; the Leinthall arms are inserted in the initial at the beginning of the Prologue, and the name 'Jaffie bien Leynthale' appears on fol 50r. The manuscript would seem to fit perfectly the category of Lydgate manuscripts described by Pearsall (1970: 76-77) as 'the handsome volume devoted principally to a single long poem, written to order for the better class of customer' that 'found home, as we see from the insertion of coats of arms, in the libraries of the nobility and gentry'.

The entry for LP 7510 in *LALME* (III: 174) does not specify which part of the text was used for the analysis. It is unlikely that the entire text was analysed systematically: firstly, many forms in the present material do not appear in *LALME* (e.g. *mychel mukel mykel* 'much', *yen ey3en eyes* 'eyes', *nor* 'nor', *3ouen* 'given', *be are bep beth aren* 'are'); secondly, the text is of portentous length. The present analysis is based on a proportionally small sample, only ca 19 % of the entire text (fols 1-4, 14-18, 36-39, 50-54, and 8 folios from Book IV);²⁸ however, this sample, which contains ca 5,400 lines of text, provides a very large amount of material and shows a relatively regular usage. The analysis is based on paper copies from a microfilm in Edinburgh University Library

Analysis

In *LALME*, LP 7510 was localized in the north of Herefordshire, roughly in the Wigmore-Leinthall area. For the present purpose, the following distinctive forms, all of which occur regularly, may be used for localizing the text:

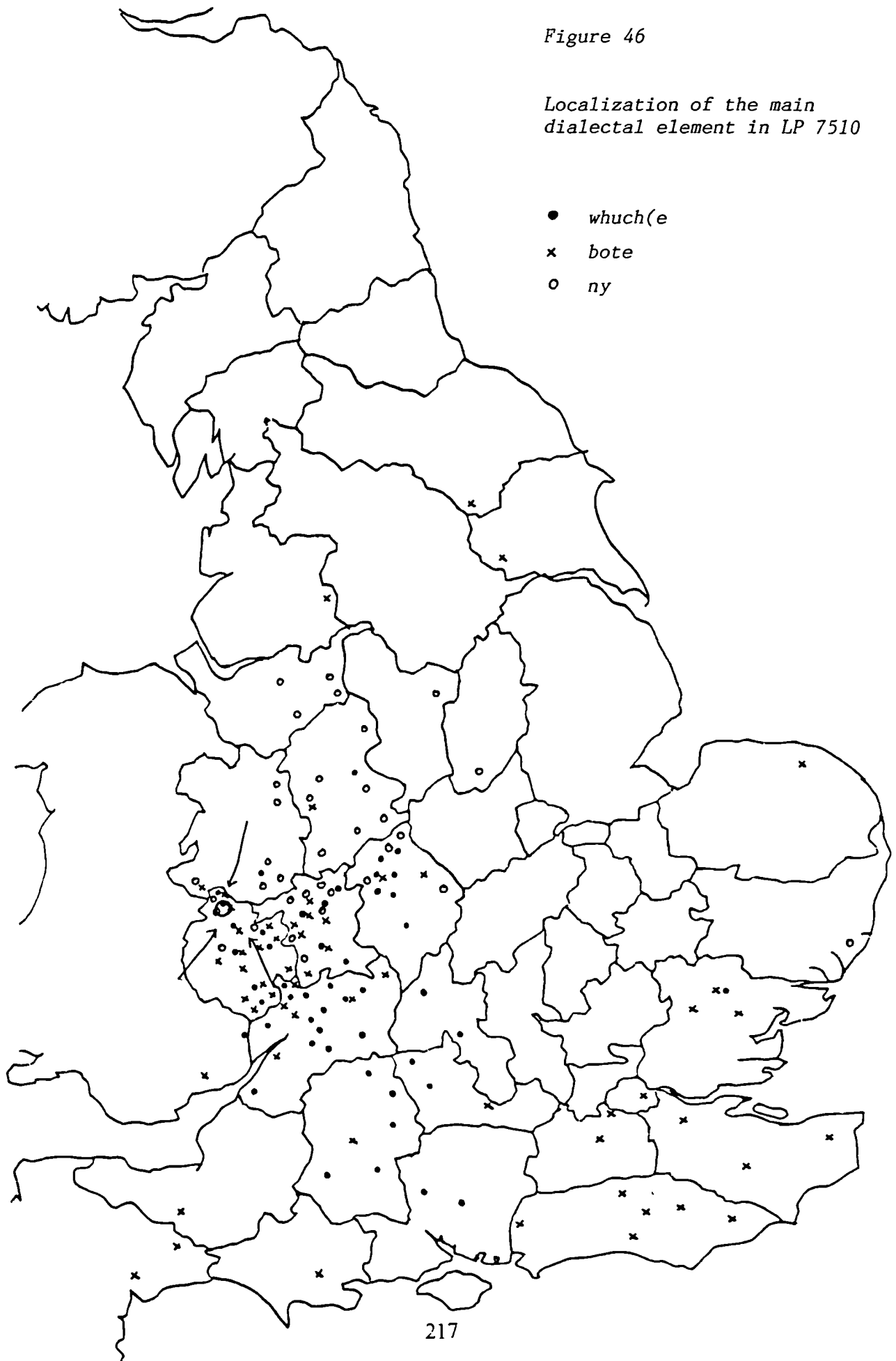
eche ‘each’, *swuche* ‘such’, *whuche* ‘which’, *mykel mukel* ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *lesse* ‘less’, *bote* ‘but’, *ny* ‘nor’, *3utte* ‘yet’, *a3ayn(-* ‘again(st)’, *panne þo* ‘then’, *whanne* ‘when’, *3ouen* ‘given’, *mon* ‘man’, *þonk(-* ‘thank’, *dradde dredde* ‘dreaded’, *fuyr* ‘fire’, *furst* ‘first’, *dude dede* ‘did’, *stude* ‘stead’, *worch- wyrk-* ‘work’ (vb), *scheo heo* ‘she’, *ben beþ ar(e)n* ‘are’, *han* ‘have’, *schuld-* ‘should’

The numerous spellings with <u> or <uy> for OE *y*, as well as the <eo> spellings for ‘she’, indicate a southern or western localization; at the late date of the manuscript, they suggest the Southwest Midlands. Forms like *mon* limit the possible placing to the West Midland area, excluding SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire, while *whuche*, *3utte*, *panne*, *þo* and *whanne* together eliminate Shropshire, N Worcestershire and all except the extreme southwest of Warwickshire from consideration. The forms *han*, *bote*, *a3ayn* and *schuld-* exclude Gloucestershire, leaving the northern and northeastern parts of Herefordshire and a large part of Worcestershire. Within this area, the localization may be narrowed down further by the distributions of *ny*, *stude* and *mykel mukel*, which limit the localization to the northern and northeastern parts of Herefordshire and a small part of NW Worcestershire; this is illustrated in Figure 46, using the distributions of *whuch(e)*, *bote* and *ny*. A more exact placing based purely on comparison with the *LALME* material does not appear possible.

The form *3ouen* ‘given’ cannot be reconciled with this localization. Its regional distribution centers on Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire, the counties defined as the core area for the so-called Central Midland Standard (CMS; see p 219); it also occurs in East Anglia and some varieties of London usage (see Figure 49; also Samuels 1981 [1988]: 93). Together with *3ouen*, a number of less regularly used forms seem to suggest an eastern dialectal element in the text.

Figure 46

Localization of the main
dialectal element in LP 7510



First of all, four questionnaire items show distinctive changes, with a subset of forms occurring only in the samples taken from the second book (fols 36-39, 50-54). The changes are shown in Figure 47. While the forms *a3ayn/-*, *ny*, *not* and *3utte* occur throughout the text, in Book II they appear only as variants, while the main forms are much less typical of Herefordshire usage. The form *nat* occurs in some S Herefordshire and Gloucestershire texts; however, it is mainly an East Anglian form, also found in fifteenth-century London (Samuels 1981 [1988]: 93). The forms *nor* and *agayn/-* are untypical of the SWML area; they are, however, common in most eastern dialects, and belong to the Chancery Standard; their acceptance by the scribe may reflect the late date

Item	Prologue, Book I	Book II	Book IV
AGAIN(ST	a3ayn/-	agayn/- ((a3ayn/-))	a3ayn/-
NOR	ny	nor ny	ny
NOT	not	nat not	not
YET	3utte	3ette ((3utte))	3utte

Figure 47: Changes of linguistic usage within LP 7510 (each column represents the data from two samples)

of the text. These shifts of usage may be assumed to go back to a change of usage in the exemplar(s) of the scribe, and indicate that a full study of the manuscript would be of interest.

The text also contains some minor variants that cannot be fitted into the N Herefordshire localization:

ychon 'each', *swyche* 'such', *ony* 'any', *al-be* 'though', *neyther* 'nor', *i-fere* 'together', *sylf* 'self', *eyes* 'eyes', *work* 'work' (vb), *schat* 'shalt'

The *al-be* and *i-fere* type forms for 'though' and 'together' respectively were not included in the *LALME* material; however, a consultation of the glossaries of editions of works by Lydgate shows that these forms are likely to be authorial (see e.g. Bergen 1935; Erdmann and Ekwall 1930). The other forms suggest Central or East Midland usage. The forms *ony*, *neyther* and *sylf*, as well as *3ouen*, belong to the list of diagnostic forms for the Central Midland Standard (CMS) as defined by Samuels (1963/ [1989]: 67, 1969 [1989]: 141; see also pp 41-42 above), and their distributions centre on the core CMS counties (see Figures 48 and 49). The forms *ychon*, *swyche* and *schat* cannot, however, be reconciled with this area; *schat* is exclusively an East Anglian form, while the *ich ych* and *swich swych* types occur both to the west and east of the core CMS area, but not within it (see Figure 50)

The only area where the *LALME* distributions of all the forms overlap is in S Cambridgeshire and the extreme SW of Suffolk (see Figure 51). The validity of such an exact localization is, of course, somewhat uncertain, given the late date of the text and the CMS status of many of the forms. The use of *ony*, *neyther* and *sylf*, as well as *3ouen*, may have overridden earlier dialectal distributions, made familiar by their use in CMS; in that case, they might skew the localization. Furthermore, most of the above forms seem to have been in use in London in the fifteenth century (Samuels 1981 [1988]: 93 and *passim*). A London exemplar might in itself account for most of the relict forms, and, in light of what is known about the dissemination of Lydgate's texts, it would be justifiable from a historical point of view (see e.g. Pearsall 1970: 73-75). On the other hand, the form *schat* is strongly suggestive of East Anglia, and there are at least equally

Figure 48 Distribution of the forms

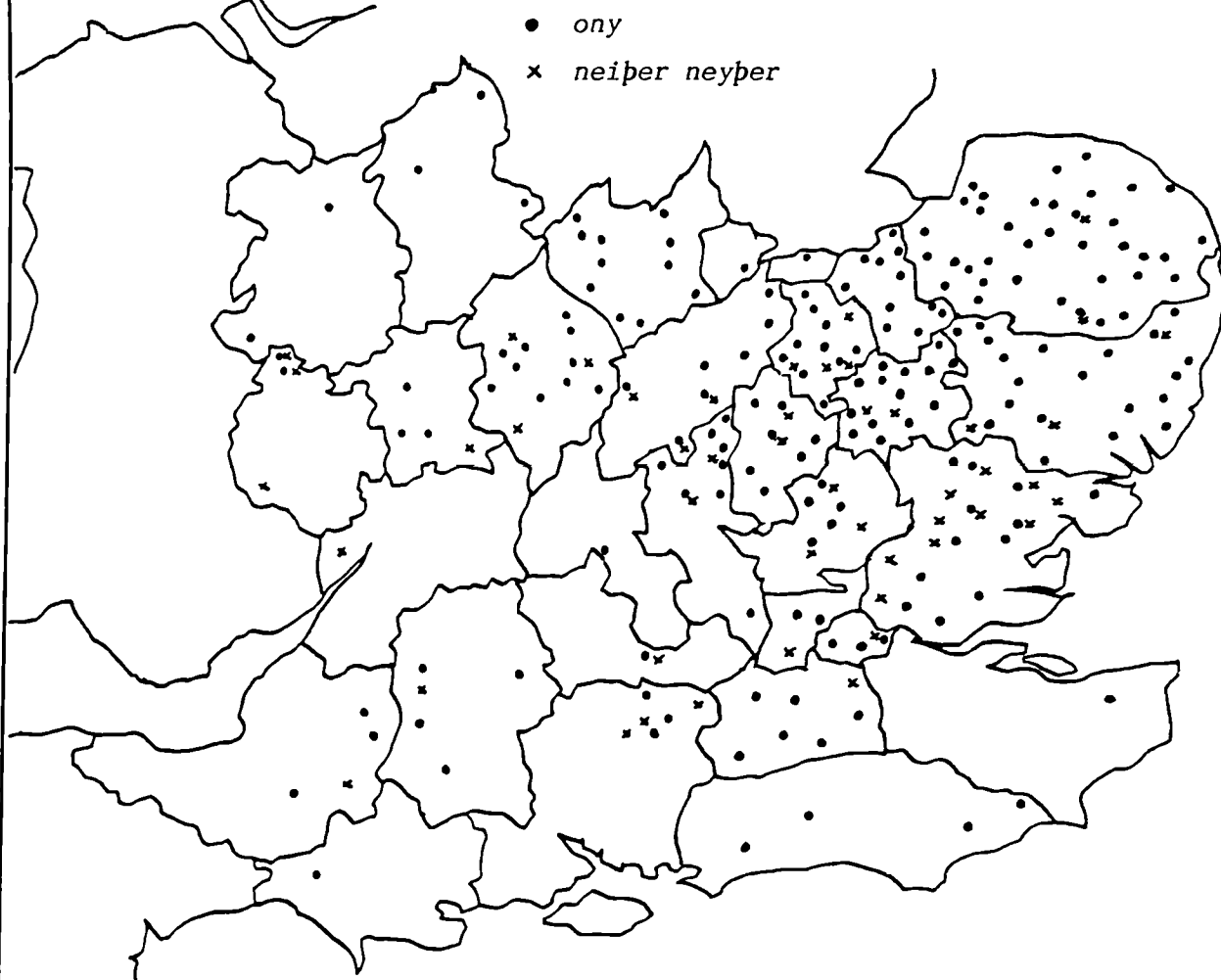


Figure 49 Distribution of the forms



Figure 50 Distribution of the forms

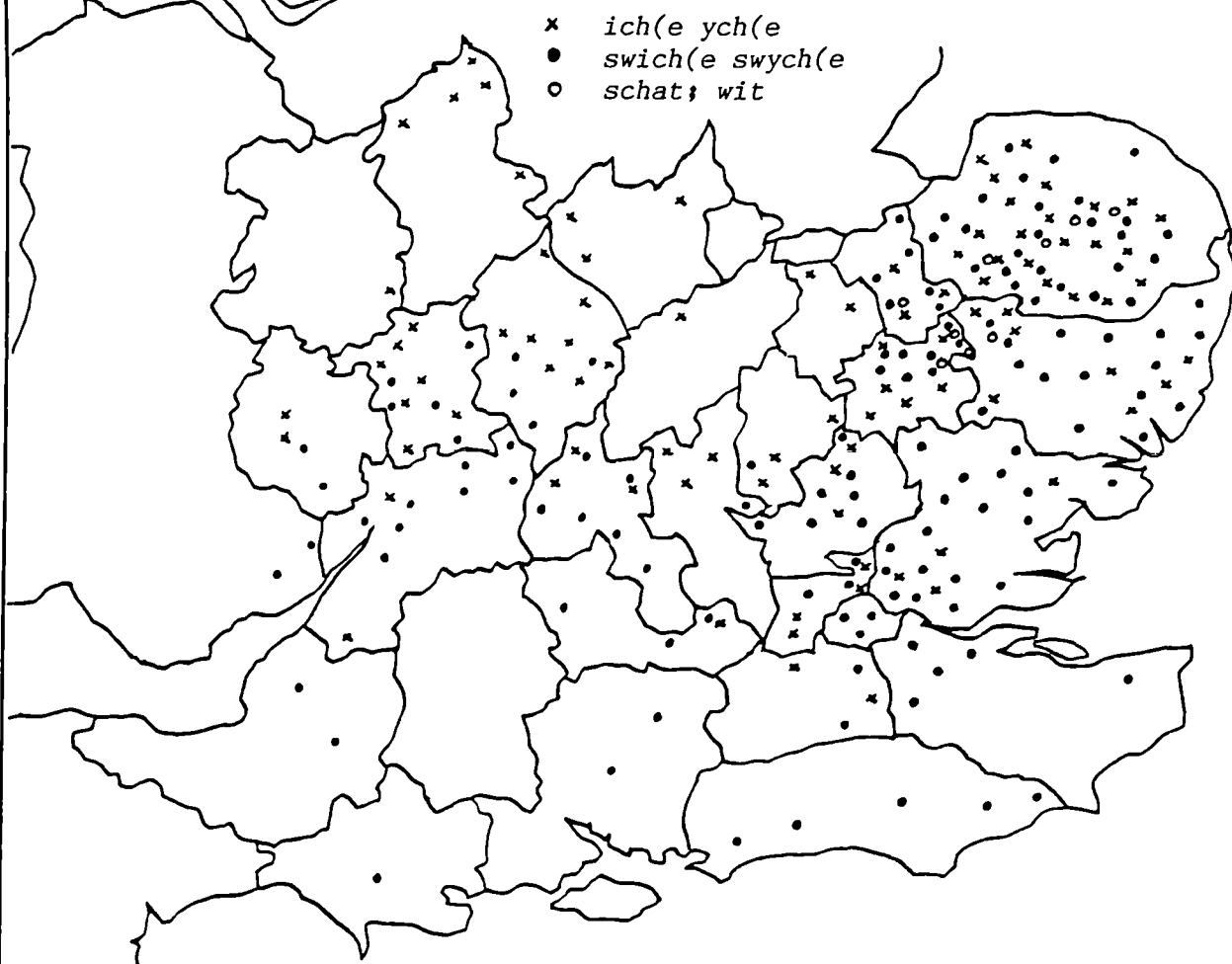
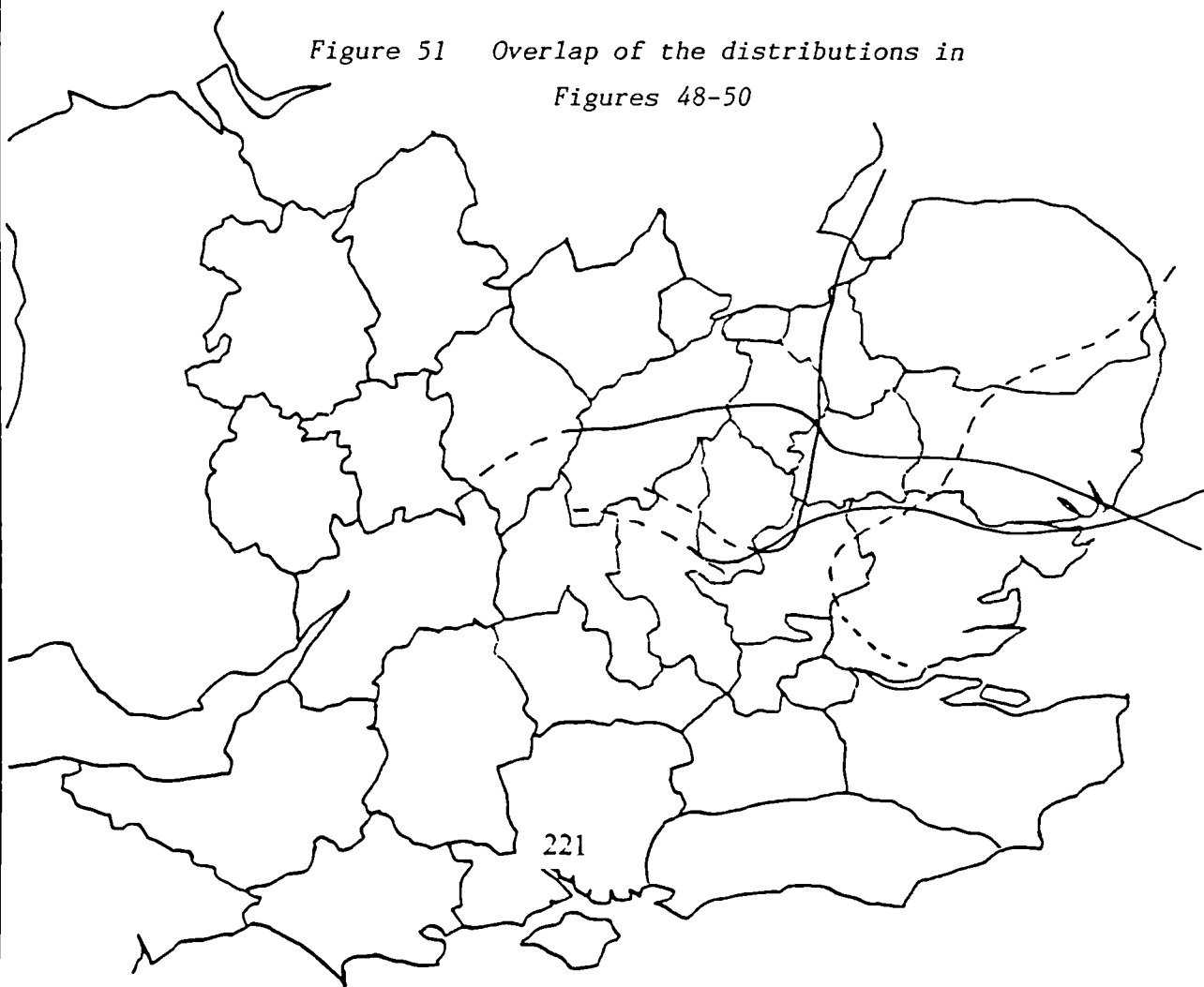


Figure 51 Overlap of the distributions in
Figures 48-50



strong extralinguistic grounds for assuming such a layer. The centre of much of Lydgate's activity, and at least to some degree of the dissemination of his works (Pearsall 1970: 33-34), lay in Bury St Edmunds, while his native village, Lidgate, lies on the border of Cambridgeshire and SW Suffolk. As the localization of the non-Herefordshire forms agrees well with these places, particularly the latter one, they may well reflect an earlier East Anglian layer, possibly the language of Lydgate himself.

The text contains, then, a number of forms that suggest an underlying layer of eastern dialect. Only one form, *3ouen*, occurs regularly, while *nor*, *nat* and *agayn* - are regular only in Book II, and several forms, mainly of an East Anglian character, occur as minor variants. At least two of these, *al-be* and *i-fere*, are definitely Lydgate's forms, while the others can be localized within a limited area that coincides with that of Lydgate's origins. The more regularly used non-Herefordshire forms agree with this area, and, following the principle of minimizing layers, may be assigned to the same layer

For the most part, however, the text should provide good evidence for the dialect of N Herefordshire. It contains a large number of strongly dialectal forms localizable only in this area; obvious relicts excepted, the usage is also regular enough to be taken to represent a single scribal contribution. Still, the frequent use of such non-Herefordshire forms as *3ouen* 'given' and, in Book II, *nor*, *nat* and *agayn*-, suggests that these forms were familiar enough to the scribe to be reproduced, and thus presumably formed part of his passive repertoire, his constraints clearly vary from item to item, and some care should be taken when interpreting the evidence.

7520 Longleat, Marquess of Bath's MSS, MS 5, fols 1-36; s xiv/xv (*LALME* 7520, in part)

The manuscript consists of 220 folios. It contains the New Testament in the so-called later Wycliffite version, preceded by a manual of readings for feast days (fols 1-36) and followed by a short commentary on the gospels (fols 217v-220v). The analysis in *LALME* was based on both the short texts, which, however, differ considerably in language. Only the text on fols 1-36 shows distinctive dialectal forms, and will form the basis of the present analysis.

The text, which is incomplete, supplies Bible readings for the church year, giving the actual text of Old Testament readings, and the incipits and explicits of New Testament ones. It is the work of a single scribe, written a tightly compressed textura. The analysis is based on a microfilm housed in Edinburgh University Library, and covers the entire text

Analysis

In *LALME*, LP 7520 was localized in the extreme north of Herefordshire. The language is consistent insofar as it shows no significant changes of usage, apart from a few working-in forms towards the beginning. The following distinctive forms occur regularly in the text:

uche 'each', *whuche* 'which', *muche meche moche* 'much', *ony* 'any', *lesse* 'less', *porgh* 'through', *bote* 'but', *pagh* 'though', *opur eybur epur* 'or', *nebur ny* 'nor', *3it 3ut* 'yet', *a3ayn(-)* 'again(st)', *sulf* 'self', *panne* 'then', *whanne* 'when', *dyede* 'died', *3oue 3ouen* 'given', *dredde* 'dreaded' (sg), *fuyr* 'fire', *luytul* 'little', *kuynde* 'kind', *kun* 'kin', *furste* 'first', *dud-* 'did', *stud-* *stid-* 'stead', *beo* 'be', *heold* 'held' (sg), *peose* 'these', *scheo* 'she', *schuld-* 'should', *han* 'have'

The spellings with <eo> and <uy, u> for OE /eo(:)/ and /y(:)/ respectively suggest a southern or western localization; by the late fourteenth century, the <eo> spellings are rare and occur only in the Southwest Midland area. The form *uche* excludes SW Herefordshire and all areas south of N Gloucestershire; *meche*, *a3ayn*, *schuld-* and *han* exclude most of the latter area, while *dredde*, *ny* and *stude* limit the area to the northern parts of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Finally, a number of forms including *whuche*, *meche* and *bote* cut off Shropshire and the extreme north of Worcestershire; together with the northern form *pagh*, these limit the possible localization to the extreme north of Herefordshire. This placing is illustrated in Figure 52, using the forms *pagh* and *bote*.

Three of the forms listed above cannot be reconciled with a localization in the Southwest Midland area: these are *ony* ‘any’, *eyþur* *epur* ‘or’ and *3oue(n)* ‘given’. They make up a dialectally coherent group, localizable in the Central Midland area centring on Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire; all three belong to the list of diagnostic forms for the so-called Central Midland Standard (CMS) as defined by Samuels (1963 [1989] 67, 1969 [1989]: 141; see also p 41-42). Other forms in the text, all occurring as minor variants, also seem to indicate a Central or East Midland element:

ich ‘each’, *siche* ‘such’, *neyþer* *neyþur* *neþur* ‘nor’, *silf* *sylf* ‘self’, *stid-* *styd-* ‘stead’, *þerk* ‘dark’, *goith* ‘goes’

Most of these would agree either with a Central Midland or East Anglian location. The forms *siche* and *neyþer*, as well as *eyþer* noted above, are in the *LALME* material restricted to the Central Midlands. Forms of ‘stead’ with <i> or <y> occur in the Central as well as in the Northwest Midlands, while the *goith* *goiþ* and *silf* types occur in the Central Midlands and the Southwest; neither type, however, occurs in East Anglia. On the other hand, *þerk* ‘dark’ seems to be a purely East Anglian form (see Samuels 1969 [1989]. 149 n 33). The *ich* type, similarly, occurs in E Anglia, as well as in the Midland area west of the core CMS counties; it does not, however, occur in the latter area, where *eche* is the regular form.

A similar, although not identical, group of Central Midland and East Anglian relicts appeared in LP 7510 (see p 218 ff). There, a treatment of the relicts as a single,

Figure 52

Localization of the main
dialectal element in LP 7520

• bote

× pagh



localizable layer was considered reasonable, as the localization fitted exactly the known historical provenance of the text. In the case of the present text, however, the situation is different. While it is just possible to fit all the non-Herefordshire forms in an area roughly comprising central Cambridgeshire and southern Ely, the overall distribution patterns and dialectal status of the involved forms make such a localization much less plausible than in the case of LP 7510. Virtually all the forms fall into one of two clear categories, of typically Central Midland and East Anglian forms respectively; only *ony* and *3ouen*, which the scribe uses regularly, are common in both areas. Secondly, the forms in the present text, unlike those of 7510, suggest a very strong influence of the Central Midland Standard. Samuels (1963 [1989]: 67; 1969 [1989]: 141) has listed the following forms as typical of this variety:

mych ‘much’, *sych* ‘such’, *ony* ‘any’, *silf* ‘self’, *stide* ‘stead’, *3ouen* ‘given’, *si3* ‘saw’, *lijf* ‘life’, *e(i)per* ‘or’

All the forms listed, except *mych* and *si3*, occur in the present text, either sporadically or as regular forms. For ‘saw’, moreover, the related spellings *sie3* *se3* occur as minor variants beside usual *say*. Forms for items like ‘life’ and ‘wife’ were not collected for the present study, however, according to *LALME* (IV: 318), spellings of the *lijf* type do occur in the text. It seems, then, that of the recalcitrant forms found in the text, all except the once-only forms *iche* and *perk* have a CMS connection; conversely, the text contains examples of all the diagnostic CMS forms listed by Samuels, with the exception of *myche*. As this variety is particularly connected with Wycliffite writings, the appearance of traces of it in a manuscript containing a Wycliffite Bible text is not unexpected. Accordingly, the non-Herefordshire forms might be attributed to an element of CMS, rather than to a localizable dialectal layer.

The usage does not fulfil the criteria for a thoroughgoing *Mischsprache* as defined by Benskin and Laing (1981: 76): rather than a random sample of a large number of variants, the forms represent a fairly regular selection. While *3ouen* and *neþur* are the scribe’s preferred forms, most of the CMS forms appear only sporadically; on the whole, the number of exotic forms is small compared with the large set of strongly dialectal N

Herefordshire forms. On the other hand, the CMS-type forms are evenly spread throughout the text. The few forms that occur only at the beginning, and seem to reflect the scribe's working-in usage, agree, in contrast, with the N Herefordshire localization: so *heo* 'she', *whenne* 'when', *dohter* 'daughter', *siht* 'sight'.

The selection of CMS forms, and their even spread in the text, suggest that the usage reflects the repertoire of a Herefordshire scribe familiar with CMS usage. In the light of the sporadic forms *ich* and *þerk*, his exemplar might have contained East Anglian usage, out of which he has accepted those forms familiar to him from CMS, e.g. *3ouen*, *ony*; the variant *meche* 'much' rather than CMS *miche* would be suggestive in the same direction. The text should provide good dialect evidence, as long as obvious relicts and CMS forms are excluded, and the constrained character of the usage is borne in mind.

Comparison of LPs 7510 and 7520

The scribal usages contained in 7510 and 7520 are very similar, although not identical. The two texts agree in their forms for the majority of the questionnaire items, as well as in a number of distinctive patterns of spelling; a selection of the shared forms is given below

suche 'such', *whuche* 'which', *muche* 'much', *many mony manye monye* 'many', *any eny ony* 'any', *þilke þylke* etc 'the same', *lesse* 'less', *fro from* 'from', *þorgh* 'through', *bote* 'but', *3yf* 'if', *þan* 'than', *ny* 'nor', *a3ayn* - 'again(st)', *þanne* 'then', *whom wham* 'whom', *whanne whan* 'when', *breþren* 'brothers', *yen* 'eyes', *morwe* 'morning', *syluer seluer* 'silver', *fleschss* 'flesh', *hye hiegh* 'high', *oune* 'own', *trewe truw-* 'true', *cam* 'came', *3yue* 'give', *3oue(n* 'given', *seyde* 'said', *pruyde* 'pride', *fuyr* 'fire', *hytel* 'little', *kyn kun* 'kin', *furst(e* 'first', *yuel* 'evil', *worch-* 'work', *worschup* 'worship', *swerd* 'sword', *sche scheo heo* 'she', *hit it* 'it', *pr pl -en*, *wol* 'will', *woot* 'wot'

Most forms used in the localization of 7510 are shared by both texts; where the two LPs differ, 7510 tends to show colourless variants, or ones that suggest a beginning spread of standard forms. All major differences between the two LPs that involve regularly used forms are summarized in Figure 53. Only one western dialect feature, the *mon* type, occurs in 7510 but not in 7520; however, considering the much larger quantity of forms in 7510, and the small proportion of <o> spellings, this is hardly significant. At the same time, many of the strongly dialectal main forms in 7520 occur as minor forms in 7510; so *þagh*, *ouper*, *sey*, *dude*, *ous*, *þay*, *schullen*. Purely orthographical differences are few, and tend to involve relative frequency rather than absolute selection. Thus 7520 uses thorn and yogh more frequently than 7510, and unstressed vowels are usually spelled <e> in 7510 but <u> in 7520. The most striking feature of 7520 is the frequency of <eo> spellings (e g *beo* ‘be’, *seo* ‘see’, *þeof* ‘thief’, *cheose* ‘choose’, *heold* ‘held’, *leornynge* ‘learning’); in 7510, they are restricted to *heo* ‘she’ (see p 350).

The two usages are clearly closely related. The shared forms listed above suggest that both belong to a limited geographical area, and the shared occurrence of unusual spellings like *a3ayn* -, *fleschss*, *hiegh* suggest either a shared, highly specific, spelling tradition, or a direct relationship of some kind. This is reinforced by a large number of more general shared features of orthography; while a full discussion of these must fall outside the present study, a few particularly interesting types may be listed:

- A tendency to double vowel symbols, e g *maad* ‘made’, *chees* ‘chose’, *goold* ‘gold’, *hoote* ‘hot’ and *rood* ‘rode’ (7510); *maad* ‘made’, *chees* ‘chose’, *heere* ‘hear’, *hoolde* ‘hold’ and *roos* ‘rose’ (7520). The doubling is occasionally extended to short vowels, as in *saat* ‘sat’ (7510), and even unstressed ones, as in *freedom* ‘freedom’ (7520).²⁹
- The use of the digraph <ie> for /e:/, e g *fiet* ‘feet’, *3ier* ‘year’, *hier* ‘here’, *tieth* ‘teeth’ (7510); *fiede* ‘feed’, *fiet* ‘feet’, *3ier* ‘year’, *hiere* ‘hear’, *sied* ‘seed’, *schiep* ‘sheep’, *tieþ* ‘teeth’ (7520). As with the previous feature, the dialectal status of these spellings is uncertain.³⁰

Item	LP 7510	LP 7520
EACH	eche	uche ((eche))
THOUGH	þogh ((al-be)) (((þagh)))	þagh 5 þogh 1 þaug3 1 þou3 1
OR	or	or 8 oþur 5 eyþer 5 eþur 4
NOR	nor ny (ne) ((neyther))	neþur (ny) (((neo)))
YET	3ut(te; 3et(te	3it 4 3ut 3 3yt 3 3itte 1
SELF	self ((sylf))	sulf (self) ((silf sylf))
SAW	saw(e 4 ((saugh sey))	say ((siegh seygh sie3))
MAN	man ((mon))	man
THANK	þank- 4 þonk- 3	þank- 2
FATHER	fader	fader fadur
DID	dyd ((dude dede))	dud- ((did- dyd-))
BE	be	beo be
THESE	þese (these)	þeose þese
US	vs (((ous)))	ous ((us))
THEY	þey (þay) ((they))	þay ((þey))
SHALL <i>pl</i>	schal (((schullen)))	schullen ((schul))
MAY <i>pl</i>	may	mowen 2 mown 1 moun 1 may 1

Figure 53: Differences in linguistic usage between LPs 7510 and 7520

- Doubling of <w>, e g *powwer* 'power', *sywwe* 'sue', *toward* 'toward', *trowwe* 'think' (7510); *bowwyd* 'bowed' (7520)
- Doubling of <ch>, <gh> and <th>, e g *cachche* 'catch', *fechche* 'fetch', *gruchchyng* 'grudging', *rechchelesched* 'carelessness', *wrechchede* 'wretched'; *neghgheþ* 'approaches'; *syththe seththe* 'since' (7510); *gruchchyng* 'grudging', *strechcheþ* 'stretches' (7520).

The two last types show a very restricted pattern of distribution in *LALME*; this is concentrated in the N Herefordshire - S Shropshire area, where they also occur in MS Lincoln's Inn Hale 150 and in Harley 2253, localized in S Shropshire and N Herefordshire respectively. These two fourteenth-century texts, in particular Harley 2253, seem to reflect a dialect very closely related to that of the much later 7510 and 7520 (see also p 271 below).

The nature of the relationship between 7510 and 7520 cannot be determined with certainty. The former appears to be of a considerably later date than the latter, and its textual history cannot go further back than Lydgate's composition of the *Troy Book* (1420). Considering the probable time gap, it would seem relatively unlikely, if not impossible, that the texts would go back to the same scribal usage. On the other hand, the numerous archaic or archaistic features of their orthography, as well as the similarities of usage they share with earlier texts like Harley 2253, suggest an orthographic tradition of some antiquity; the similarity of the two usages might, perhaps, be explained by their adherence to such a tradition.

As regards the localization of the texts, certain forms in 7520 often suggest a somewhat more northern usage than that of 7510; however, the differences may simply reflect the later and more standardized usage of 7510. A geographical distinction between the texts hardly seems feasible, and it might make better sense to treat them as reflecting essentially the same local usage. The less exact localization of 7510 reflects its less strongly dialectal character; both texts may, however, be assumed to belong to a N Herefordshire area, centred on the localization of LP 7520. It may be noted that this area is in agreement with the manuscript connection of LP 7510 in Leinthall.

4.2.15 The Harley 2253 miscellany: LP 9260

9260 London, British Library Harley 2253, fols 55v-59r, 59v-61v, 62v-67r, 70v-76r, 77v-92v, 106r-107r, 114v-115r, 119r-121r, 124v-128v; s xiv 2/4 (*LALME* 9260)

The manuscript consists of 141 folios, and contains a miscellany of verse and prose in English, French and Latin. All the texts here analysed are in the hand of a single scribe.³¹ The hand is a fairly informal anglicana; occasional lines in Latin are written in textura. The same scribal hand also appears in parts of another miscellany, MS BL Royal 12.C.xii, as well as in a number of Ludlow documents from the period 1314-1349 (Revard 1979: 200). The Royal MS seems to have been added to over a long period of time, and has been dated to 1320-1340 (Ker 1965: xxi). The English texts in Harley 2253 seem, on the other hand, to have been copied during a relatively short period of time (Ker 1965: xxii), on the basis of both internal and paleographical evidence, Ker dates them to the fourth decade of the fourteenth century (1965: xxi). Ker's datings are independent of the evidence of the Ludlow documents; as the dates agree well with each other, the manuscript must be considered one of the most reliably dated texts in the present material

A considerable amount of study has been carried out on the historical and geographical background of the manuscript and its scribe (see Ker 1965: xxi-xxiii, Samuels 1984 [1989] 256, 262). The discovery of the Ludlow documents has provided definite evidence for the scribe's geographical situation during a period of thirty-five years, other external evidence linked with the manuscript, including possible connections with the Mortimer and Orleton families, also point to the border areas of Herefordshire and Shropshire (Ker 1965: xxii-xxiii).

The English texts consist almost entirely of verse, both secular and religious; most are short lyrics, but longer pieces are included, such as the romance *King Horn*, a dream book (the *Pseudo-Daniel*) and the *Proverbs of Hending*. The only prose text in English is a short text of the prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune. Several of the items occur also in other manuscripts (see Laing 1993: 95). Parts of the text have appeared in

numerous editions, including most anthologies of ME verse. A facsimile edition was published in 1965, with an introduction by Ker (Ker 1965).

The present analysis is based on the facsimile edition, and covers the English text in its entirety. All individual literary texts, including short pieces of verse, were originally analysed separately, and significant differences of usage between them are noted where relevant.

Analysis

In *LALME*, LP 9260 is localized in the Leominster area in north Herefordshire. The process of localization was demonstrated in an article by Samuels (1984 [1989]: 256-263). He compares the usage of the text with sixteen other manuscripts localized or localizable in the area (most of which belong to the material used in the present study) using a list of diagnostic forms. For the sake of clarity, the number of texts and forms is kept to a minimum, however, each step is carefully accounted for and the localization leaves little room for doubt. The localization attempted here is thus not intended to improve on Samuels' work, but simply to ensure that all present localizations are based on similar guidelines and, as far as possible, a shared range of forms, in order to be compatible within their own framework.

The following forms were used by Samuels to demonstrate the localization:

vch 'each', *pourh* 'through', *pah* 'though', *nout noht* 'not', *marewe* 'morning', *streynþe stremþe* 'strength', *3ef* 'gave'; *serewe* 'sorrow', *(of)sprung* 'spring'; the acceptance as minor variant *hy hii* 'they'; single occurrence of *e3enen* 'eyes'

Of these forms, *serewe* and *(of)sprung* fall outside the present questionnaire, and *e3enen* is here excluded as a very minor variant. The *hy* type forms for 'they' are also relatively minor, and should not be used as primary evidence. All the remaining forms are suitable for the present purpose, and may be supplemented with a number of additional forms.

The following list of forms might, then, be considered:

vch ‘each’, *w(h)uch* ‘which’, *muchel* ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *pourh* ‘through’, *bote* ‘but’, *3ef* ‘if’, *pah* ‘though’, *oper* ‘or’, *nout* ‘not’, *a3eyn* ‘again’, *po* ‘then’, *marewe* ‘morning’, *streynþe* ‘strength’, *3ef* ‘gave’, *v-* for *f-*, *mon* ‘man’, *con* ‘can’, *nome* ‘name’, *heuede* ‘had’, *wes* ‘was’, *prude* ‘pride’, *lutel* ‘little’, *sunne* ‘sin’, *furst* ‘first’, *dude* ‘did’, *euel* (*eouel*) ‘evil’, *stude* ‘stead’, *hued* *huld* ‘held’, *heo* *hue* ‘she’, *hue* *he* ‘they’, *bueþ* *beþ* ‘are’, *han* ‘have’, *shulde* ‘should’

As the text is earlier than most of the *LALME* material for Herefordshire, the distributions of some forms may have changed during the intervening time, making comparison difficult; for example, spellings like *lutel*, *sunne*, and, possibly, forms like *oper* may be assumed to have been more widespread in the earlier period. Most of the forms should, however, be compatible with the rest of the *LALME* material.

A large number of forms, including *mony*, *eny*, *prude*, *heo*, *hue* and *bueþ*, indicate in general terms a southern or western localization. The <o> spellings of *mon*, *con* etc, the forms *3ef* ‘gave’, *heuede* and *wes*, and the form *vch* ‘each’, limit the localization to the West Midland area, excluding SW Herefordshire as well as all areas south of N Gloucestershire. A number of forms provide a northern limit, excluding Staffordshire and all except the extreme south of Shropshire; these include *w(h)uch*, *muchel*, *bote*, *3ef*, *streynþe* and initial *v-* for *f-*. The forms *marewe*, *streynþe* and *han* would seem to exclude the southern part of Worcestershire. The form *pah*, finally, would seem to limit the likely area to the north of Herefordshire and the extreme south of Shropshire. Although negative evidence should be avoided, at this early date the absence of the form *vuel* ‘evil’ is probably also significant; *vuel* is common in all of Worcestershire and most of Herefordshire, excluding the north. The most likely localization would seem to be in N Herefordshire, around or to the north of the Leominster area suggested by Samuels; this is illustrated in Figure 54, using the forms *whuch*, *pah* and *hue*. A localization as precise as that by Samuels does not seem possible on the basis of the present material.

Figure 54

Localization of LP 9260



The usage of the Harley scribe is fairly regular, even if, as Samuels (1984[1989]: 257) notes, a few individual items show a large number of forms. Apart from the examples given by Samuels, 'not' and 'they', the items 'I', 'she', 'are' and 'have' show much variation; however, virtually all the variants agree with the area. In many cases, the variants arise as predictable permutations where more than one orthographic segment is available. Most notably, OE *eo* is spelled variously <ue>, <eo>, <e> and, less commonly, <o> or <u>, giving rise to the variant spellings *hue*, *heo*, *he*, *ho* 'she'. Fluctuation in the use of initial *h-*, as well as between *wh-* and *w-* likewise occurs in all parts of the text. Perhaps most interestingly, a number of items show two or more forms in relatively equal proportions, with traditional (or early ME) forms beside their late ME equivalents: so *y* ~ *ich* ~ *ych* 'I', *haue* ~ *habbe* 'have', *sugge* ~ *saye* ~ *segge* 'say' and *hap* ~ *haueþ* 'has'. All items containing this type of variation show differences in proportion between the literary texts. It may be assumed that such differences are the result of constrained selection, and reflect the usage of the exemplars; however, it seems that both the traditional and innovative variants were familiar and acceptable to the scribe

The evidence of the rhyming usage shows that many of the texts were originally written in different dialects (see Brook 1933). The non-rhyming usage also occasionally contains forms that cannot be fitted into the N Herefordshire area; most notably, the northern present-tense verbal ending *-es* is fairly common in a number of texts of northern origin, including items 36, *When þe nyhtegale singes*, and 48, *Thomas of Erceldoune* (Laing 1993: 93)

Otherwise, relicts occur only sporadically. The most distinctive set occurs in the romance *King Horn*, according to Samuels (1984[1989]) an originally southeastern text. The relicts include *efter* 'after', *hy* 'she' and *al-þ'* 'until', as well as some grammatical forms obsolete in the *LALME* Herefordshire material (see pp 330 n 55, 335 n 61). According to *LALME*, *hy* 'she' is virtually exclusively Kentish. No form *al-þ'* appears in the *LALME* material for 'until'; however, as several examples of *al-what* occur, all in Kent, the single form *al-þ'* might be a blend of this type and the usual Harley form *o-þ'*. Finally, *efter* 'after' occurs in ME period in the northern, southeastern and SWML areas, in each case as a result of independent developments. As its occurrence in 9260 is

restricted to *King Horn*, it may be considered at the most a very marginal variant, if not a relict. The only other relicts in non-rhyming usage are occasional northernisms; so *kyrkes* in item 90 (*Thomas of Erceldoune*). As noted above, the forms *hy hii hi* ‘they’ occur in several parts of the text, suggesting that forms of this type might have been, to some extent, acceptable to the scribe; however, as the forms are rare, their status within the scribe’s repertoire may have been very marginal.

The usage of the scribe is otherwise relatively consistent, and would, on the whole, seem to reflect fairly narrow regional constraints. As Samuels (1984 [1989]: 257) notes, the latter vary from item to item; however, all forms that appear throughout the manuscript agree very well with the N Herefordshire localization. The diversity of the material as regards style, vocabulary and dialectal background provides a good means for assessing the scribe’s own contribution, as well as resulting in a wide range of linguistic material. Accordingly, the text should provide excellent dialectal evidence. As its dating and localization, although approximate, are backed by firm extralinguistic evidence, the text may also be considered a good point of reference for the assessment of other texts

4.3 Overview of the material

As might be expected from their inclusion in the *LALME* material, most of the texts analysed above contain a regular and consistent usage that is localizable in Herefordshire, and that may be considered reliable as evidence for the dialect of the area. A small number of scribal texts have, however, been found unsuitable for use, while others contain elements of non-Herefordshire usage that should be discarded as evidence. In some cases, the definitions of scribal texts have been modified on closer analysis.

Three texts that appear in *LALME* as single scribal texts have here been divided into two or three separate ones. Two of these, the *LALME* LPs 7300 and 7350, represent the work of more than one scribe, and are here labelled accordingly as 7301/2 and 7351/2/3. As the usages within each manuscript are closely similar, and seem to represent the dialect of a single limited area, both are mapped as single entries. A third text, the *LALME* LP 7400, is a composite text, produced by the *literatim* copying of exemplars containing two very different usages; the two strands have here been separated into LPs 7401 and 7402, only the former of which is suitable for use as evidence

Three further texts, the *LALME* LPs 7361, 7391 and 7481, were acknowledged in *LALME* to be the work of more than one scribe; in all cases, the separate scribal contributions were described as ‘two hands in similar language’ and combined into a composite profile. In the case of two of these, 7361/2 and 7481/2, the constituent scribal texts differ considerably, and are of unequal value. Only the first scribal text has in each case been deemed to provide good evidence (see pp 90, 152). LP 7391/2, on the other hand, contains a dialectally coherent usage throughout, and its constituent scribal texts have been mapped together as a single entry.

While the majority of the texts may be considered reliable, many contain elements of usage that cannot be reconciled with the area. A few contain traces of the so-called Central Midland Standard (CMS; see pp 41-42); these include a herbal (7361), a bible translation (7460) and a Wycliffite manuscript (7520). Two medical texts, 7290 and 7362 show a strong CMS element; as both seem, as a whole, to contain a mixed usage, they are discarded as evidence in the present study (see p 90).

Even though several of the texts date from the latter part of the fifteenth century, few show signs of the spread of the Chancery Standard. Only two late texts, LPs 7350 and 7510, contain a few forms in regular use that seem to be alien to the local dialect but agree with the usage of the standard; so *agayn* ‘again’, *nor* ‘nor’. On the other hand, a number of texts show a tendency to select dialectally ‘colourless’, widely used variants rather than narrowly local ones, making exact localization difficult. One text, LP 7482, contains insufficient regionally distinctive usage even for a rough localization, and is discarded as evidence.

Most texts contain minor variants that do not agree with their main dialectal character. In some cases, these form a localizable subset which may be assumed to reflect a dialectal layer from an earlier stage in transmission; for example, LP 7500 seems to contain an element of Gloucestershire usage, while the *King Horn* text in LP 9260 shows traces of Kentish. In a few texts, such elements are strong enough for special care to be required in interpreting the evidence; these include LPs 7401, 7450 and 7510, as well as the central part of 7380.

The most frequently occurring type of relicts, besides the CMS ones noted above, consists of what looks like features of northern usage. The most common are present-tense verbal endings in *-(e)s* and the Scandinavian-derived forms of ‘their’ and ‘them’; there are also numerous examples of the present participle ending *-and* and of spellings with <a> for OE long a, like *stan* ‘stone’ and, possibly, *hand land strang*. Occasional items of vocabulary, e.g. *kyrkes* ‘churches’, *yl(l)* ‘evil’ stand out as northern; various forms of the *(un-)to* type for ‘until’, might also be grouped here. It may be coincidental that such seemingly northern forms are particularly common in texts localized in the southern part of the county, in particular LPs 7260, 7320, 7330, 7380 and 7391.

No single explanation would seem to account for these forms. In some cases, they demonstrably reflect an earlier layer of northern or NML usage (e.g. in LPs 7380 and 7401/2), however, for the majority of the concerned texts such an explanation would be implausible. Samuels (1985[1988]: 76) has suggested that a sprinkling of northern forms might indicate a London origin, reflecting a tendency of London-based northern scribes to copy *literatim* with occasional lapses to their own spelling. It seems, however, unlikely that all texts with occasional northern forms require such an explanation. More

probably, the forms might simply reflect the increasing mobility of forms and their users during the later ME period, eventually leading to the ‘common currency’ effect described elsewhere by Samuels (1981[1988]: 90):

spellings which have hitherto been members of regional systems become like the coins when two currencies are combined; they have the same functional value as before, but they pass from writer to writer, or from writer to printer and back again, and their regional significance is lost.

It is notable that the ‘northernisms’ form a very limited set. The most common ones, the verbal endings in *-es* and the Scandinavian pronoun forms, are expanding forms during the fifteenth century; their appearance in otherwise dialectal southern texts probably reflects their growing familiarity, and might be seen as part of the same influences that eventually lead to standardisation, rather than as a mixture of separate regional usages.

Although the ‘northernisms’ were listed together, they cannot be assumed to form a single group. In particular, northern lexical items like *kyrkes*, *barnes* may always be assumed to reflect either northern origins or, as in the case of the *Piers Plowman* texts, special circumstances like the needs of alliteration.

A few texts that otherwise seem to provide excellent evidence may represent an earlier stage of language than the dating of the manuscript suggests. LP 7310 seems to be a late fifteenth-century near-*literatim* copy of an earlier text, probably from the beginning of the century (see p 94); LP 7500, on the other hand, was probably copied from a fourteenth-century text, and retains several features that must be considered archaic for a fifteenth-century date (see pp 212-13). Finally, LP 7330, based on a manuscript of the C-text of *Piers Plowman*, contains numerous examples of what must be considered archaistic usage (see p 130). These three texts should not be used uncritically as evidence for diachronic developments.

The *literatim* method of copying seems to be evidenced in two texts (7310 and 7401/2), while fairly thorough translation is demonstrable at least in 7320, 7500 and 9260. In most cases, however, as far as the scribal behaviour can be deduced, it seems to involve constrained selection within greatly varying constraints. Two texts seem

certain to reflect the active usage of a writer or a scribe, and are thus of particular importance as evidence. LP 7320 is an unusually thorough translation, and seems to show no attempt to conform to conventional orthography or literary style; it may be assumed to provide very good evidence for a living variety (see pp 119-20). LP 7410 is an authorial holograph, and must represent spontaneous rather than constrained usage; while the spellings have a strong element of convention, they provide interesting indications about spoken usage (see pp 183 ff, 351 f).

The Herefordshire texts may, in summary, be grouped into three categories according to their value as evidence. Firstly, there are texts that seem to provide reliable evidence; these form the majority. Secondly, some texts contain a demonstrable element of another dialectal usage; these may still be used as evidence, although with caution. Finally, a few texts are entirely unsuitable as evidence. The texts are listed below, with brief notes about their dialectal characteristics.

I Reliable evidence

7260	traces of N or E dialect
7280	possible traces of E dialect
7301/2	
7310	probably archaic for its date
7320	(very thorough translation)
7330	some archaistic usage
7340	
7351/2/3	late text; some standardized forms
7361	some CMS forms
7370	
7380	partly from NEML exemplar (?Nottinghamshire)
7391/2	
7410	(authorial holograph)

7420	
7430	
7460	some CMS forms
7481	
7500	possibly somewhat archaic for date
7520	some CMS forms
9260	copied from range of exemplars

II Texts with separable element of other dialect

7401	near- <i>literatim</i> copy of translation from NML usage, probably with a Nottinghamshire / Lincolnshire element
7450	strong colouring of Gowerian language, especially in second part of text
7510	strong colouring of EML (?Cambridgeshire / Suffolk) dialect, possibly Lydgate's language

III Texts not suitable as evidence

7290	mixture of Herefordshire dialect, CMS and other elements; related to 7362
7362	mixture of Herefordshire dialect, CMS and other elements; related to 7290
7402	mixture of SWML dialect and a NML variety (probably with a Nottinghamshire / Lincolnshire element)
7482	a short text; colourless and partly standardized

4.4 The localization of the Herefordshire texts

Dialect criteria

On the basis of the localizations carried out in 4.2, it is now possible to isolate a group of questionnaire items of particular diagnostic value for localizing texts in the Herefordshire area. A subset of forty such items may be defined; these are listed in Figure 55.

1/12	EACH	53/98	CHURCH
2/10	SUCH	57/42	STRENGTH
3/11	WHICH	62/139	GOOD
4/16	MUCH	71/93	CLEPE
5/13	MANY	76/144	HEAR
7/209	THE SAME	101/14	MAN
13/28	FROM	124/21	WAS
14 54	THROUGH	134/106	DREAD <i>pa</i>
15/258	WITHOUT <i>prep</i>	151/125	FIRST
16 91	BUT	163/114	EVIL
17 33	IF	164/227	STEAD
20/32	THOUGH	188/154	HOLD <i>pasg</i>
24 46	NOR	208/48	WORLD
25/45	NOT	237/4	SHE
26 40	YET	246/7	THEY
28/36	AGAINST	248/8	THEM
29 213	SELF	262/17	ARE
30 238	TOGETHER	265/22	SHALL <i>pl</i>
31/30	THEN	280/142	HAVE
41/255	WHOSE	281/171	LIVE

Figure 55: Questionnaire items for localization within the Herefordshire area

The two numbers given for each item refer to the present questionnaire and the *LALME* one respectively; the latter numbers are italicized. The items are selected to provide as many distributional divisions within Herefordshire as possible; however, a questionnaire containing these items should be a reasonably powerful tool for assessing the likely localization of any SWML text. Not all attested forms of the listed items are of equal interest; for example, the form *eche* ‘each’ may be considered relatively colourless, while *vche* and *euche* are valuable as dialect criteria in the SWML area.

As Herefordshire is a relatively small county, it is not surprising that few forms are diagnostic for a Herefordshire localization on their own; however, a large number of forms may be used to provide approximate cut-off points in different directions. On the basis of these forms, it is possible to build up a network of combinations that delimit Herefordshire usage as a whole, as well as some distinguishable dialect areas within the county, and that may be used to establish the precise localization of the texts in relationship to each other. The following forms of the listed items may be used as such criteria; maps showing their *LALME* distributions are provided in Appendix 4.

Southern forms

- Herefordshire, cutting off areas to the north: *whuch(e)* ‘which’, *muchel* ‘much’, *bote* ‘but’, *þo* ‘then’, *whas* ‘whose’, *huld* ‘held’, *he hue* ‘she’, *beþ beop* ‘are’, *han* ‘have’;
- excluding extreme north: *þorow(e þoro3(e)* ‘through’, *þei þey* ‘though’, *togader(e)* ‘together’, *vuel(e)* ‘evil’, *wordle* ‘world’, *schulleþ* ‘shall’ (pl);
- southern half / southwest: *swich(e)* ‘such’, *meny* ‘many’, *þulk(e)* ‘the same’, *fram* ‘from’, *þrou3* ‘through’, *noþer* ‘nor’, *nat* ‘not’, *3ut* ‘yet’, *sulf* ‘self’, *cherch(e)* ‘church’, *hur(e huyr(e)* ‘hear’, *ferst* ‘first’, *wordel* ‘world’, *hi hy* ‘they’, *ham* ‘them’

- southeast: *mochel* ‘much’;
- extreme south/southeast: *bepoute bypoute* ‘without’, *goud(e)* ‘good’, *clup(e)* ‘clepe’, *hir(e) hyr(e)* ‘hear’, *hii hij* ‘they’;

Northern forms

- cutting off areas to the south: *mochel* ‘much’, *prou3* ‘through’, *pau3* ‘though’, *stremp(e) streynth(e)* (and variants) ‘strength’, *han* ‘have’
- excluding extreme south: *a3ein a3eyn* ‘against’
- excluding southwest: *vch(e)* ‘each’, *w(h)uch(e)* ‘which’, *bote* ‘but’, *3ef* ‘if’, *pau3* ‘though’, *mon* ‘man’, *wes* ‘was’, *dredde* ‘dreaded’
- north/northeast: *ny* ‘nor’, *nouht* ‘not’, *stude* ‘stead’, *heo* ‘they’
- extreme north *pa(g)h* ‘though’, *arn* ‘are’

Eastern forms

- extreme east: *peke* ‘the same’, *poru* ‘through’

Western forms

- Herefordshire only: *lif(e) lyf(e)* ‘live’; with surrounding areas, *euch(e)* ‘each’; with N Worcestershire, *stremp(e)* ‘strength’, *han* ‘have’; with W Gloucestershire: *schullep* ‘shall’ (pl)

The following forms occur only or mainly within a single limited area, including the part of Herefordshire specified above: *euch(e, vche, whuch(e, by-poute, þa(g)h, ny, sulf, whas, streinþ(e, mon, wes, vuel(e, stude, huld(e, hue, heo* ‘they’, *beoþ, schulleþ*. The other forms may have important distribution patterns in other parts of the country (e.g. *cherche* and *nat* in the East and *lif(e lyf(e* in the North), which should be taken into consideration when using the forms for localization.

The distribution boundaries must, of course, be assumed to be fuzzy and approximate, and they cannot be expected to coincide with county boundaries. Texts localized in the extreme north of Herefordshire might equally well belong to the south of Shropshire, while the most southern and southeastern texts would fit equally well in Monmouthshire or NW Gloucestershire. Bearing this in mind, it may be noted that forms that delimit the dialect to the north are relatively numerous, while few forms provide cut-off points to the south and south-east. Similarly, few forms provide an eastern limit on their own, however, most of the S Herefordshire forms exclude Worcestershire, and a general lack of diagnostic markers in the eastern direction is apparent only in the far north.

Two sets of distributional patterns seem to form bundles of isoglosses across the county, separating it into a northeastern and a southwestern half. Firstly, a large number of forms, including *meny* ‘many’, *fram* ‘from’, *togader* ‘together’, *hure* ‘hear’, *wordle* ‘world’ and *hi hy* ‘they’, occur only in the southern half of the county; the boundaries of their distributions seem to roughly follow the River Wye, and then fan out to form a loose bundle across the South Midlands (see Figure 56). A second bundle is formed by the forms *mon* ‘man’, *wes* ‘was’ and *vch(e* ‘each’, the southwestern boundaries of which are to some extent matched by the distributions of *whuch(e* ‘which’, *bote* ‘but’ and *3ef* ‘if’. These forms, which show a specifically West Midland distribution pattern, are limited to the northern and eastern parts of Herefordshire (see Figure 57). These patterns would seem to suggest dialectal divisions of some antiquity; their significance will be discussed in chapter 7 (see p 376 f).

Figure 56 Bundle of isoglosses marking the northern limits of meny, fram, togader, hure, wordle and hi/hy

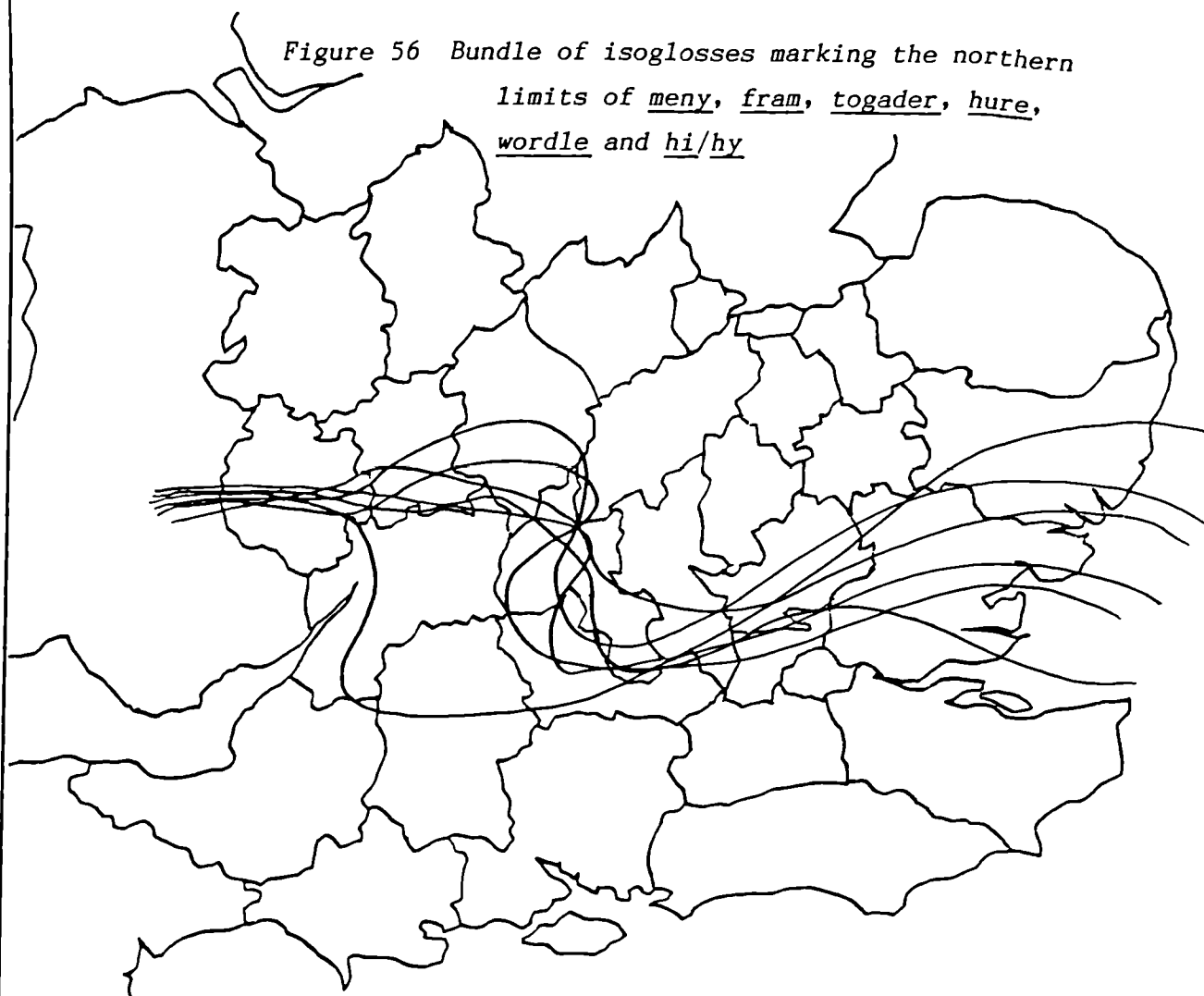
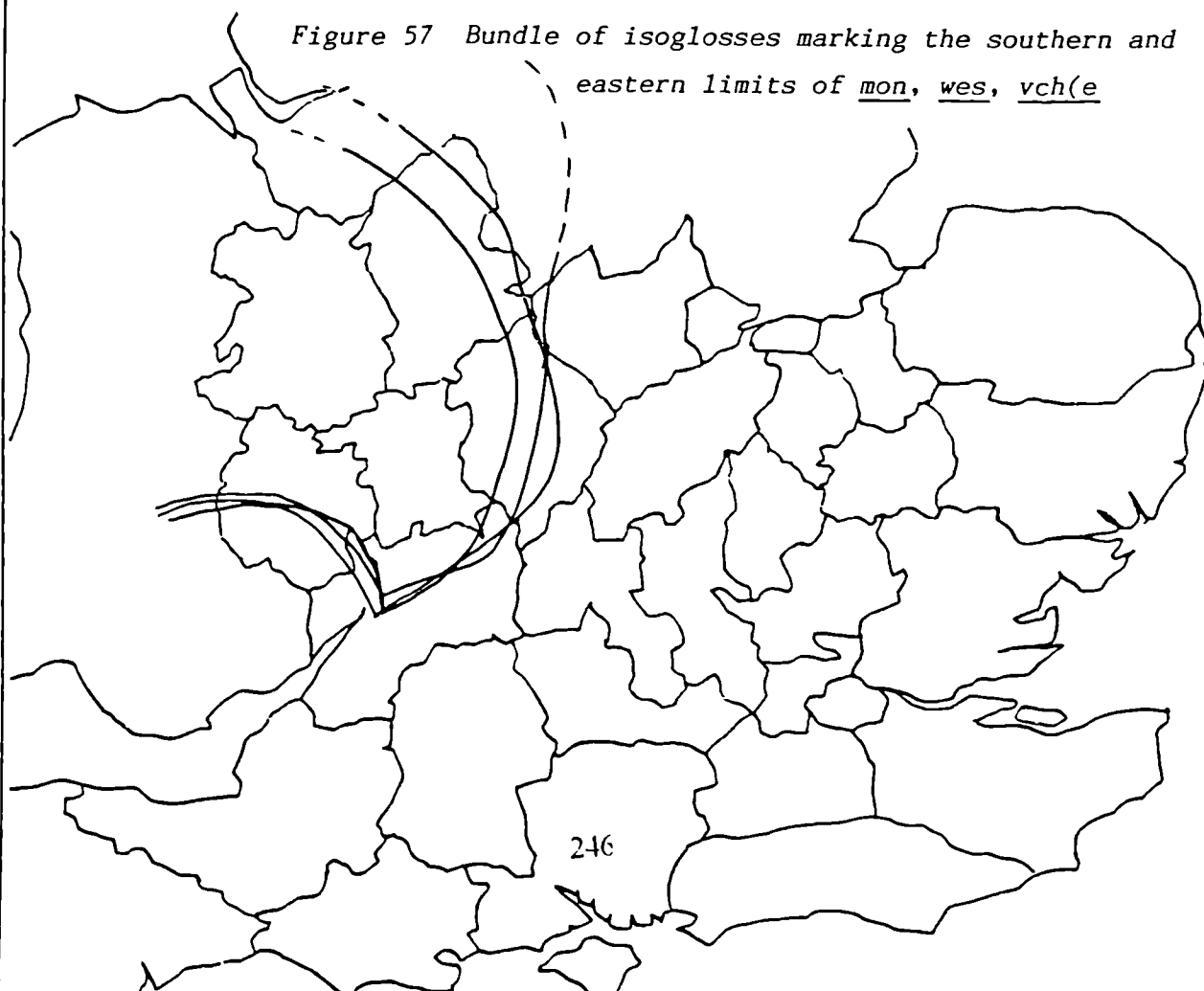


Figure 57 Bundle of isoglosses marking the southern and eastern limits of mon, wes, vch(e)



Relative localizations of the texts: the overall picture

The relative localizations of the texts may, finally, be considered. On the basis of the individual localizations carried out in 4.2, the possible ranges for each text may be drawn on a map. Texts with overlapping and adjacent localizations may then be compared to each other, using the set of diagnostic forms listed above, in order to define their relative positions as precisely as possible. The resulting relative localizations are shown in Figure 58. To illustrate the process, the distributions of some of the forms may be indicated by isoglosses separating groups of texts; so, *pa(g)h* ‘though’ separates the extreme north; *stude* ‘stead’ the northeast; *beþout(e)* ‘without’ the southeast and *goud(e)* ‘good’ the extreme south. A single isogloss may be drawn from west to southeast, dividing approximate areas of *mon*, *wes* to the north and *meny* to the south. Finally, a western boundary for *þau3(e) þaw(e)* ‘though’ may be added. Within the resulting subdivisions, the precise positions of the texts in relation to each other may still be refined. For illustrative purposes, the following forms may be compared:

7301/2	<i>vuclē</i>	/	7310	<i>yuell</i>	
7370	<i>a3eyn(es)</i>	/	7280	<i>a3ens</i>	
7280	<i>self</i>	/	7361	<i>sylf</i>	
7481	<i>world-</i>	/	7401	<i>wordel- wordl-</i>	7410 <i>wordl-</i>
7460	<i>muche</i>	/	7450	<i>mochel</i>	
7450 60	<i>fro(m)</i>	/	7430	<i>fro(m) fram</i>	
7510/20	<i>sche(o) heo</i>	/	9260	<i>hue</i>	
7510 20	<i>þorgh</i>	/	9260	<i>þourh</i>	/ 7500 <i>þoru</i>

Together with the isoglosses entered on the map, these forms define the relative positions of all the texts except for the following groups: 7380, 7391/2 and 7420; 7401 and 7410, 7510 and 7520.

LPs 7380, 7391/2 and 7420 contain sets of forms that do not easily fit into the network, nor are they easily placed in relation to each other. Their mixture of northern and southern types of forms suggests a central localization. The two former texts

Figure 58

Relative localizations:
approximate divisions
within Herefordshire

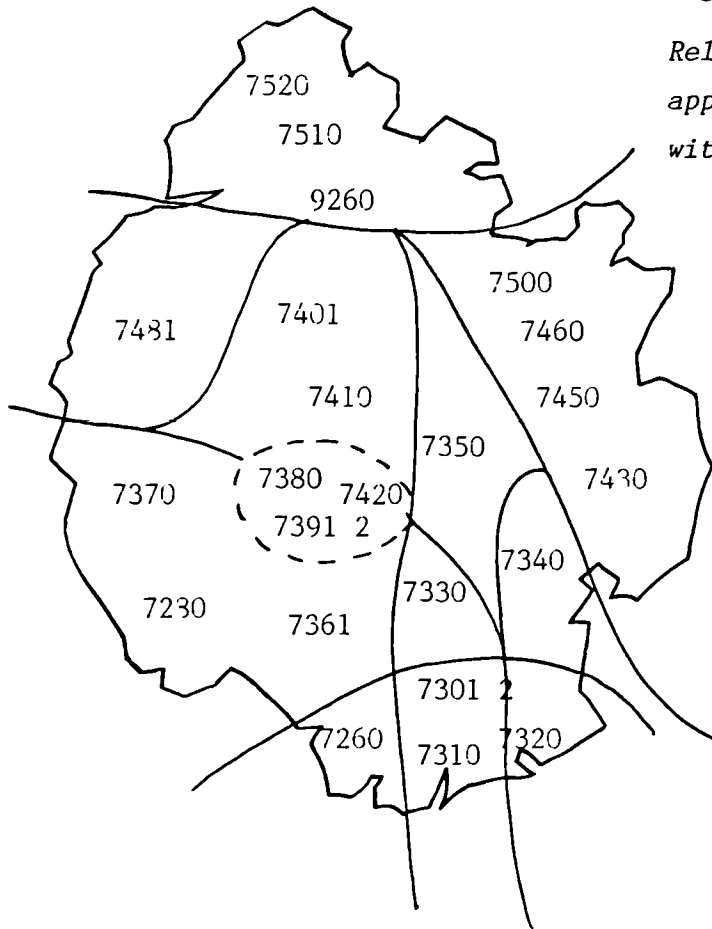
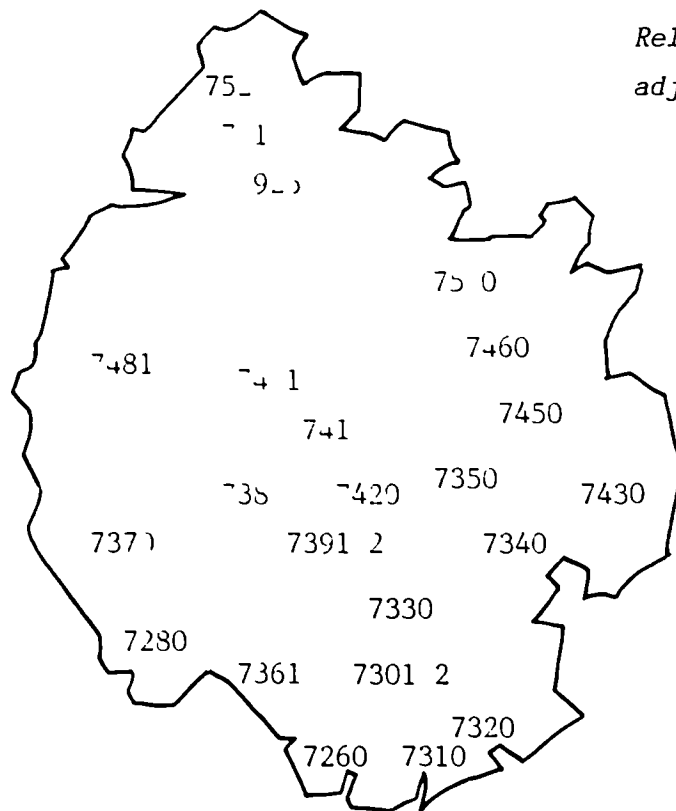


Figure 59

Relative localizations:
adjusted picture



contain a related language, and have a connection with the city of Hereford (see pp 79, 160; also Samuels 1984 [1989]: 258); it is probable that the language of all three texts should be localized in the city of Hereford. The two texts placed immediately to the north, LPs 7401 and 7410, both date from the fourteenth century and have extralinguistic connections with Hereford; as Samuels (1984[1989]: 258) notes, it is likely that the more northern character of 7410, compared with the previous group, suggests a shift in usage between fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Hereford, with southern influences growing in importance. It does not seem possible to delimit the localizations of 7401 and 7410 in relationship to each other. A few forms in the latter suggest a slightly more southern colouring (e.g. *sulf* vs *self*, *boeth* vs *ben*); the difference is, however, likely to reflect the textual background of 7401.

The localizations largely confirm the *LALME* map; while some slight adjustments are suggested, no absolute changes in relative position are proposed on the basis of the present material. The adjustments may be summarized as follows:

- LP 7290 is removed and LP 7361 brought southward;
- LPs 7401 and 7410 are assumed to reflect the usage of the same area.
 Although placed to the north of the central group consisting of 7380, 7391/2 and 7420, all five texts probably reflect the usage of Hereford;
- LP 7420 is moved slightly southward in relation to the other texts, and forms a central group together with 7380 and 7391/2, which are assumed to reflect the usage of the same area;
- LP 7440 is removed from the LME map, being too early to be fully comparable, and will be considered in chapter 4 below;
- LP 7450 is moved slightly to the east in relation to the other texts;
- LPs 7510 and 7520 are assumed to reflect the usage of the same area, with 7520 showing a stronger dialectal colouring.

The adjusted positions are shown in Figure 59. It may be noted that the five texts that are assumed to reflect the usage of Hereford appear as three separate localizations, with 7401 and 7410 to the north, 7380 and 7391/2 to the south and 7420 to the east. These

localizations should not be taken to reflect, literally, positions within the city, but different regional influences; as with any urban centre with a large surrounding countryside, it may be assumed that the usage of Hereford would at all times be heterogeneous, reflecting various regional influences, which might vary in relative importance over time.

5 EARLIER AND LATER MATERIALS

5.1 Possibilities of diachronic comparison

As noted in chapter 1, the importance of the late ME period for historical dialect study derives from a unique set of historical circumstances, resulting in a large body of material that reflects the regional diversity of linguistic usage. In chapter 4, a group of texts from this period, localized in Herefordshire, were studied in detail; the value and nature of the material as evidence was assessed, and a set of orthographic criteria for Herefordshire usage was defined

While a study limited to the LME dialect of an area is of interest in itself, the dynamic state of the language throughout this period means that comparisons with earlier and later materials, if at all feasible, might add considerably to its relevance. However, such comparisons involve a number of problems. The surviving evidence varies greatly in quantity and type from period to period, and the sets of distinctive dialectal features change over time. While language change reduces the number of comparable features, comparison is also hindered by changes related to the production of texts, including literacy, scribal practice and standardized spelling systems.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to define such dialectal materials of the preceding and following periods that might be used for comparison with the present evidence, with due consideration of the limitations outlined above. For the Southwest Midland area, the early ME material is relatively copious and of considerable interest, and will be discussed in some detail in section 5.2. For the Old and Modern English periods, the present study can do little more than point to what seem like interesting approaches, some examples of OE, EModE and PDE evidence that might be comparable with the ME material are discussed in 5.3 and 5.4 below.

5.2 Early Middle English

5.2.1 The thirteenth-century material

A comparison between the early fourteenth-century texts, LPs 7410 and 9260, and virtually any Southwest Midland text of the thirteenth century shows considerable differences, which justify the inclusion of the former texts, but not the latter, in the late ME material analysed in chapter 4. As McIntosh (1976 [1989]: 225) has noted, ‘a very considerable... revolution affected the written English... over the course of the fourteenth century. it is not merely that the spoken language changed... but that the conventions for setting down even what had not changed underwent marked modification’. While texts like 7410 and 9260 might be termed transitional in relation to McIntosh’s revolution, their usage is on the whole recognisably LME, particularly as regards orthographic conventions and morphology, in contrast, the late thirteenth-century MS Oxford, Jesus College 29, localized in E Herefordshire, shows a morphological system little modified from OE, and a spelling system more reminiscent of early texts like *Ancrene Wisse* than of even a conservative fourteenth-century text like 9260 (for illustrations of the changes in both systems, see pp 300 and 329 ff)

These changes make direct comparison between early and late ME dialectal materials extremely difficult. However, Samuels has demonstrated that it may still be possible to link an early text, like the thirteenth-century ‘A’ text of La3amon’s *Brut* (MS Cotton Caligula A ix), with a particular group of localized LME texts, which its usage matches closer than any others (see *LALME* I: 25). The procedure is summarized by McIntosh (1976 [1989] 224-225):

[EME texts] invariably display some characteristics which are no longer in evidence in the later period and which it would therefore be fruitless to attempt to ‘match’ neatly with those of any later texts no matter where

these were written. It is then a question of discounting such features and - concentrating on those which have not become obsolete in later Middle English - of seeking to discover which later texts show the most striking affinities with the earlier ones. If it proves possible to single out a considerable number of such texts and to provide good grounds for associating all these with one area, then it is reasonable to assign the earlier texts to that same area rather than anywhere else.

This is undoubtedly the only reasonable approach to relating the linguistic usage of EME texts to the later material. However, the study of EME dialects also involves considerable difficulties in itself.³² In particular, these derive from the paucity of evidence and the influence of traditional spelling practices, both of which are directly related to the social and linguistic situation prevalent after the Norman Conquest.

The Anglo-Saxons, unlike other European nations, used the vernacular extensively for administrative and legal purposes, and seem to have developed a *Schriftsprache*, usually referred to as 'Late West Saxon', in which the bulk of later OE texts were written. While the homogeneity of this usage has sometimes been exaggerated (see Smith 1991: 56) it nevertheless represented a strongly conservative set of spelling conventions. The Norman Conquest changed the linguistic situation fundamentally; in Margaret Laing's (1991: 33) words, 'whatever was the case in the spoken language... there was a serious dislocation in the use of written English'. English was replaced by Latin as the official language of government, as well as for most purposes of writing; from the late twelfth century on, French gained importance, first as a language of literature and, later, of law. While English did not cease to be written, most of the output during the first century after the Conquest consists of the copying of pre-Conquest texts, and new composition was very scarce.

In this situation, the OE *Schriftsprache* was no longer a living and developing medium; when the composition of new texts begins to increase from the late twelfth century on, their language is clearly different:

[in the period covered by *LAEME*] there are two very different types of written English: (1) versions of Old English texts and (2) new writings in early Middle English. The second type is clearly distinct from the first, indicating that spoken English had continued to change and evolve throughout this time (Laing 1991: 36).

In the following centuries, English writing had to accommodate itself somewhere between an increasingly archaic tradition, where it survived, and newer systems of spelling, more closely related to the spoken usage. The lack of official status and, consequently, of any centralizing tendency based on a single power base, meant that these new systems gradually came to vary greatly from region to region, resulting, eventually, in the dialectal variety characteristic of LME.

The overall number of English texts from the early period is very small compared with the later material. This is less true of the Southwest Midlands than of many other areas: in the so-far published accounts of *LAEME*-related work, at least fifteen texts of reasonable length have been placed in the general SWML area (Laing 1991: 45-52). Provided that the texts, at least to some extent, reflect regional variation in a way comparable to the later material, it is possible to build up a network of localizable texts, even though it will by necessity be much less precise than the *LALME* network.

While all EME texts must be assumed to reflect their regional background to some extent, their spelling practices depend heavily on convention, and seem to reflect the development of the spoken mode to a much lesser extent than LME texts typically do; Eric Stanley (1969: 26) speaks 'of the exceptional artificiality of e.ME orthography, and of the possibly even greater artificiality of very late OE orthography on which it is based'. The late survival of traditional spelling conventions is particularly evident in the South-West Midlands area, where, it seems, the continuity of English writing was never broken; Franzen (1991: *passim*) has shown that OE manuscripts were studied and copied in the area until the thirteenth century. A direct continuity with OE spelling tradition is shown in the retention of certain redundant features of orthography in several thirteenth-century texts of the SWML area, including those that contain the so-called AB-language (see pp 257, 259 ff).³³

The conservative character of the EME written language is related to aspects of text production and scribal behaviour. Few scribes would work predominantly in English, and their working habits appear, to some extent, to have reflected the requirements of Latin copying. In particular, the habit of *literatim* copying, required in Latin, would seem to have been transferred to the copying of English texts; there is some evidence that *literatim* copying was relatively common during this period (see Smith 1991: 54 and references there cited). The scope for introducing innovative spellings would thus be limited. Another factor, the conscious traditionalism of the scribes themselves, has been suggested by Smith (1991: 54-55), who argues that, at least in some cases, 'EME scribes were aware that traditional English spellings existed and, wishing to uphold tradition, wrote on purpose what may well have seemed to them archaic forms'.

The linguistic usage of an EME text cannot, then, be assumed to represent the dialect of its scribe as readily as that of a LME text. Angus McIntosh (cited in Laing 1991: 44) has suggested that 'a surviving early Middle English text may be the culmination of a process of transmission in which the local characteristics of the person who produced the final copy may only be sparsely represented'; in other words, the language of such a text is the product of its textual history. On the other hand, the individual studies in chapter 4 suggest that even LME texts generally reflect scribal constraints rather than thoroughgoing translation; there would seem to be no particular reason why constrained behaviour should not be expected in EME texts as well.

A more difficult question is within what kind of parameters the repertoire of an EME scribe might be expected to work. Given the relatively restricted literacy and book-production during this early period, and a tendency towards *literatim* copying and traditionalism, it might be expected that the EME texts would reflect a less clinal kind of regional variation than those of the later period, with a more marked tendency to focus on particular centres of influence, whether in a concrete or abstract sense.

This is borne out at least by the SWML evidence: instead of the wide range of variation that marks the later period, much of the EME usage clusters in what looks like variations of identifiable cores of fairly regular usage. The best-known example of such focusing tendencies is the so-called 'AB-language', a term nowadays used both of the individual usage of MSS Corpus 402 and Bodley 34 (see Tolkien 1929), and of an

element of similar usage present in a large number of thirteenth-century manuscripts. The AB-language has been seen both as the 'house-style' of a specific centre of text production and, more drastically, as a 'thirteenth-century literary standard' (Hulbert 1946); at least the latter view is no longer universally accepted (see e.g. Smith 1996: 66-68). As the AB-language has traditionally been connected with the Herefordshire area, the question is of importance for the present study, and will be discussed in 5.2.2 below.

It may be concluded that the EME texts present a very different kind of material from the later ones, and should be approached accordingly, bearing in mind the looser network allowing for less precise localizations, and the element of traditionalism. One line of approach, suggested by Margaret Laing (1992), is the comparison of different surviving versions of the same text, using their non-shared element as the primary evidence for localization. This method was demonstrated by Laing with reference to versions of the *Poema Morale*; a similar approach has been employed by Smith (1992) using texts of the so-called *Wohunge* group. A relatively large number of EME texts survive in more than one version or belong to a closely related set of texts; a large part of the SWML material falls into such sets, and it will make sense to consider the texts in relation to each other rather than in isolation.

The material may be taken to consist of the texts placed in the SWML area in the preliminary maps of *LAEME* localizations given by Margaret Laing (1991: 45-52), as well as a small number of unlocalized texts that contain elements of related usage. The majority of the *ca* twenty texts fall into three groups: 1) versions of *Ancrene Wisse* (*Ancrene Riwe*) and texts of the *Katherine* and *Wohunge* groups, collectively termed the 'AB-group' by Bella Millett (1984: xvi);³⁴ 2) verse collections of the kind Pearsall (1977: 94) calls 'friars' miscellanies',³⁵ with largely overlapping contents; and 3) versions of the *South English Legendary*. The texts of the third group tend to show a somewhat more southern language, centring on Gloucestershire and the South-West. The texts of the AB-group and the miscellanies are, however, localized mainly in the core SWML area consisting of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and NW Gloucestershire, and are of great interest for the present study. The thirteenth-century manuscripts that contain texts belonging to these two groups are listed below, with notes on their localizations.

The 'AB group'

- (A) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 402: *Ancrene Wisse*. 'Language of Wigmore, NW Herefords. This is the "AB-language" common to this MS (A) and Bodley 34 (B)' (Laing 1993: 24)
- (Cl) London, British Library Cotton Cleopatra C vi: *Ancrene Riwe*. 'A North Worcestershire localization seems most likely' (Smith 1991: 62).
- (N) London, British Library Cotton Nero A xiv: *Ancrene Riwe* (Hand A); *Ureison of ure Lefdi*, *Ureisun of God Almihti*, *Lofsong of ure Lefdi*, *Lofsong of ure Louerde* and *The lesse crede* (Hand B). Hand A 'can be provisionally localized in Southern Worcestershire' (Smith 1991: 62).
- (Ti) London, British Library Cotton Titus D xviii: *Ancrene Riwe*, *Sawles Warde*, *Hali Meiðhad*, *Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, *St Katherine*. Language of *Sawles Warde*, *Hali Meiðhad* and *St Katherine* 'close to AB language', while the rest 'display more northerly characteristics' (Laing 1993: 82).
- (R) London, British Library Royal 17 A xxvii: *Sawles Warde*, *St Katherine*, *St Margaret*, *St Juliana*, *Oreisun of Seinte Marie*. Three hands all in 'language similar to but not identical with AB language' (Laing 1993: 105).
- (B) Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 34: *St Katherine*, *St Margaret*, *St Juliana*, *Sawles Warde* and *Hali Meiðhad*. 'Written in a form of the "AB-language"' (Laing 1993: 124).

The 'friars' miscellanies'

- (T) Cambridge, Trinity College 323 (B.14.39): miscellany copied by at least four hands; for contents see Laing 1993: 34-37. W Worcestershire (*LALME* LP 7721).
- (D) Oxford, Bodleian Library Digby 86: miscellany; for contents see Laing 1993: 129-130; Tschann and Parkes 1996: xii ff. S Worcestershire/N Gloucestershire (*LALME* LP 7790; see Laing 1993: 130).
- (J) Oxford, Jesus College 29: miscellany; for contents see Laing 1993: 145-147; Ker 1963: ix-x. E Herefordshire (*LALME* LP 7440); 'it would fit equally well in NW Gloucs' (Laing 1993: 147).
- (C) London, British Library Cotton Caligula A ix, part II: miscellany; for contents see Laing 1993: 69; Ker 1963: xi. Composite text; not localized.

One further manuscript is linked with both groups both in contents and dialect:

- (L) London, Lambeth Palace Library 487: Lambeth Homilies, *Poema Morale* (Hand A); *Ureison of Ure Loverde* (Hand B). 'MLS [= M L Samuels] places the language on the border of N Herefords and Salop' (Laing 1993: 111)

Within each group, the manuscripts are evenly dated: all the 'AB-group' texts have been dated to the third and fourth decades of the thirteenth century, while all the miscellanies are dated to the second half, and probably the last quarter, of the century.³⁶ MS L is considerably earlier than the others, the text by hand A being dated to about 1200.

A Herefordshire localization has been suggested for A, B, J and L; these four

texts will be considered in some detail in the remainder of this section. The usage of C will also be discussed, as it is directly relevant for an understanding of J, as well as of interest in its own right. The remaining five texts are not discussed separately, but will be considered in the context of the groups to which they relate (see p 299 ff).

The AB-language will be considered first; its status is more controversial than its linguistic structure, and the discussion will largely concentrate on the former aspect. The language of the Lambeth Homilies, closely related to the AB-type, will then be considered, while a discussion of the miscellanies, which form a link with the late ME material, will conclude the section.

5.2.2 The AB-language: context and status

The 'AB-group' consists of a number of closely connected religious works, including the rule for anchoresses, *Ancrene Wisse* or *Riwle*, and the shorter prose texts collectively known as the *Katherine* and *Wohunge* groups.³⁷ These texts occur in various combinations in the manuscripts (see p 257), and show strong stylistic, thematic and verbal similarities; they also show a linguistic relationship, traditionally interpreted as a shared element identified with the so-called AB-language.

The term AB was originally used by Tolkien (1929) for the particular linguistic usage found in MSS Corpus 402 (A) and Bodley 34 (B). The language of these manuscripts, which are copied in different hands, is virtually identical, and of remarkable internal regularity; it has been taken to represent a formalized literary language, and has received much attention (for surveys of scholarship see Samuels 1953 and Dahood 1984). It has been assumed that this language was taught and used by several people, according to Dobson (1976: 122), 'at least half a dozen men, and probably more... in the forty-odd years between about 1190 and 1230', and many scholars still hold that all or most 'AB-group' texts go back to originals in this usage.³⁸

Some of Tolkien's views are no longer generally accepted. In particular, his view

of the implausibility of translation between ME dialects has not been followed by later writers, at least in its extreme form, and has been systematically refuted by Benskin and Laing (1981). However, most of the key questions on which the study of the AB-language has since centred were defined by Tolkien; for the present purpose, these may be summarized as follows:

- a) the date of composition and original dialect of the 'AB-group' texts;
- b) the relationship between the A and B texts;
- c) the status of the AB-language

As Tolkien held that the transmission of ME texts inevitably lead to 'mixed' usage, he concluded that the texts must have been composed in AB language, and that their composition could not greatly predate the manuscripts. Hulbert (1946) argued against this view, accepting translation as a possibility; however, he based his early dating of *Ancrene Wisse* on a questionable argument.³⁹ No precise dating has proved possible for the composition of any of the texts; most scholars have placed them in the early thirteenth century (see Dahood 1984: 9; Mack 1934: xx-xxi; Thompson 1958: lix; Millett 1982: xvii). The references to friars in the Corpus text of *Ancrene Wisse* (A) date this version to after 1224 (Shepherd 1972: xxi); however, the original version may well have been earlier.

Apart from purely historical considerations, the arguments for a late date have generally been based on the conclusions Tolkien drew from the lack of 'dialect mixture' in the Corpus and Bodley texts. However, in the light of current views about scribal behaviour, there is no need to assume that the linguistic usage of the originals was in all respects identical to the AB-language. On the other hand, the view of Bliss (1952-53: 6), that the originals were probably composed in 'approximately the same' - not necessarily identical - usage' is still reasonable; this is also suggested by the linguistic relatedness of all the surviving early 'AB-group' texts. Whether or not it should be held likely that the usage was AB itself, depends on whether this is considered a literary 'standard' or not.

The argument that the AB-language, as found in MSS Corpus 402 and Bodley

34, represents a standard or house style is still largely based on Tolkien's (1929: 108-109) argument (my italics):

We have two scribes that use a language and spelling that are nearly as indistinguishable as that of two modern printed books... The *consistency* and individuality of the spelling, *since it is shared by two hands of very different quality*, is not that of an Orm, of an isolated methodist, but suggests obedience to some school or authority.

As Tolkien admitted, neither the internal consistency nor the identity of the usages of the two texts are absolute. Later scholarship has shown that the usage contains more variation than early studies, notably that of d'Ardenne (1936), allowed (see e.g. Dobson 1972: lxxxix n 3); however, it is still true that the usage, especially of A, is unusually regular for a ME text. Similarly, the differences between A and B, and in particular those 'errors' and variant forms that occur only or mainly in B (see p 272 ff), tended to be ignored in early studies; various points of difference have since been noted between the usages (see Dahood 1984: 12 and references there cited). These differences seem to concern mainly features of vocabulary and syntax, levels of language less likely to show translation than orthography and morphology (see pp 30-31, 109-110), and may thus indicate different textual backgrounds. On the levels of orthography and morphology, the regular usage of the texts show few significant differences. Accordingly, the usage of A and B may be considered to reflect, on the whole, a single form of language; the question is whether this justifies the traditional assumption of a literary standard.

The notion of a literary language, developed by 'conservative clerks who loved the English language as they knew it', with 'roots in a living speech' and 'a thread of connexion with the ancient West' (d'Ardenne 1936: 177-178) is obviously attractive. However, the assumption that a thirteenth-century standard would achieve an overall homogeneity such as to produce, independently, manuscripts with as nearly identical usage as Corpus 402 and Bodley 34, seems unlikely. In comparison, the OE *Schriftsprache* allowed a considerable degree of variation (Smith 1996: 67); similarly, the written standard that developed from the fifteenth-century Chancery usage remained

highly variable for a very long time, even with the stabilizing influence of printing (see e.g. Scragg 1974: 67-68). Both these usages, furthermore, developed as a direct consequence of the large-scale official use of English in administration, a situation that did not exist in the thirteenth century (see p 259; also Clanchy 1979: 154, 165-67). Even the enforcement of a local standard or 'house-style' of such fixity as AB is unparalleled, and would surely require special motives; while Dobson (1976: 122) speaks without hesitation of the 'time to realize the need for a common literary form of the vernacular, to evolve it, and to train the scribes' he does not consider the question why such a need should have been felt in the first place. On the whole, even allowing for the traditionalism associated with the early ME period in the Southwest Midland area (see p 254), the idea of a precisely fixed and maintained standard language in the thirteenth century seems extremely unlikely. Instead, a more historically plausible model should be sought, based on the existing evidence treated as a whole, rather than on two manuscripts in isolation.

Most of the 'AB-group' texts show a linguistic usage similar to that of A and B, but with some differences of detail. Traditionally, these texts were considered to show blends of 'pure' AB-language and other dialects.⁴⁰ However, as Smith (1992: 586) has pointed out, the relationship between the texts should rather be seen in terms of constrained selection. Their linguistic similarity suggests a partially shared set of conventions, followed by a large number of scribes in varying degrees, according to their repertoires and copying habits. There is no need to identify the shared tradition with the exact usage of MSS Corpus 402 and Bodley 34; a more sensible approach might be to regard the AB-usage simply as one of the permutations of a looser, less fixed set of conventions.

Such an approach would provide a more realistic, and dynamic, idea of the West-Midland 'literary language'. Like the West-Saxon *Schriftsprache*, or like present-day 'received pronunciation', it may be seen as a focus rather than a fixed norm: while a large number of users approximate to it, their versions of it vary, and some produce a more 'typical', more closely focused, version than others.

This model should now be considered against the arguments for a literary standard. The main argument for standard status has been the near identity of the

linguistic usages of MSS A and B, copied by different scribes. If it is considered unlikely that these usages are two independent manifestations of a fixed and maintained standard, another explanation should be found. The simplest would seem to be that the usage of both texts goes back to that of a single scribe. This presupposes that at least one of the two manuscripts would be the work of a *literatim* scribe working very faithfully. This possibility was not taken seriously by Tolkien, who considered dialectal contamination inevitable; however, it now appears to be generally held that at least the Bodley scribe worked *literatim*, and ‘failed to write AB language where his exemplar failed to provide it’ (Laing 1993: 125; see also Mack 1934: xiv; d’Ardenne 1936: xxxiii).

Another argument for the status of AB as a standard involves the conventional nature of some of its spellings. For example, the usages of the Corpus and Bodley texts both show a purely orthographic distinction between *oþer* ‘other’ and *oðer* ‘or’ (see Jack 1976). According to Dahood (1984: 13), ‘because the distinction is arbitrary... it is a sure indication that AB was a literary standard’. However, the distinction does not in itself presuppose a standard: like several other features typical of the usage, it presupposes a systematic mind. It is, of course, possible that the distinction was actively observed by several scribes, just like other purely conventional spellings were;⁴¹ for this, however, there is no evidence.

It is, accordingly, here suggested that the usage of A and B may best be seen as an individual version of a loosely-defined set of conventions, rather than as a ‘pure’ form of a literary standard. Instead of assuming the existence of a standard, the linguistic relationship between the various texts of the ‘AB-group’ might be considered in terms of a common inherited basis, that has subsequently been variously modified to reflect dialectal variation. Apart from being more plausible from a historical and sociolinguistic point of view, this approach makes the AB language directly comparable with other SWML varieties.

5.2.3 The AB-language: geographical placing

The AB-language has traditionally been connected with the Herefordshire area. The connection rests, most importantly, on manuscript associations: the Corpus MS was given to the church of St James in Wigmore around 1300, while the Bodley MS has sixteenth-century associations with eastern Herefordshire (see p 266). While each of these associations would be of little evidential value on its own, the combination is suggestive. The connection of the texts with the Welsh border areas is further reinforced by the appearance in them of a number of Welsh loanwords, otherwise very rare in Middle English (see pp 379-80). These points, among others, are noted by Dobson (1976: 117-118) as part of his general argument for a Herefordshire localization:

As it can hardly be accident that two manuscripts written in a pure West Midland dialect and each containing distinctive words from Welsh have connections with Herefordshire, it is now generally accepted that the 'AB language' is a literary form of Middle English developed either in northern Herefordshire or southern Shropshire. A location in southern Herefordshire would on linguistic grounds be less probable; and the districts of Archenfield and Ewias... had still been predominantly Welsh in population and culture at the time of the Domesday survey.

Dobson's argument is highly convincing as regards the general localization of the usage. However, his identification of Wigmore Abbey as the source of the AB-language, although fairly generally accepted (see e.g. Laing 1993: 24), rests on doubtful premises, including the assumption that the composition of *Ancrene Wisse* and the 'development' of the AB-language must have taken place in the same centre. A reconsideration of the localization on purely linguistic grounds, using extrapolation from the *LALME* material, will be of interest, even if the early date of the text means that the placing must necessarily be very approximate.

(A) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 402, fols 1-117; s xiii 2/4

The manuscript consists of 117 parchment leaves, and contains *Ancrene Wisse*. The text is copied by a single scribe in a clear angular hand, dated to the first half of the thirteenth century. The manuscript contains a number of contemporary and somewhat later corrections and alterations, which suggest that 'the text was read carefully in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' (Ker 1962: xvi). An inscription at the foot of the first folio records the gift of the manuscript to 'the church of St James of Wigmore' by John Purcel, at the instance of the precentor, Walter de Ludlow. The latter has been identified as an important member of the Augustinian house in Wigmore; the Purcels were a south Shropshire family, with a John Purcel holding lands both near Wigmore and near Ludlow in the late thirteenth century (Ker 1962: xvii-xviii).

This version of the *Ancrene Wisse* is considered to represent a fair copy of a revised version, probably by the author, of the original text (Dobson 1962: 163, 1966: 195); among its additions, it contains two references to the friars, dating the revision to after 1224. Apart from the text in MS Cotton Cleopatra C vi (Cl), it is the earliest surviving text of *Ancrene Wisse*.

The analysis covers four sections of the text, including fols 20-29, 45-54, 70-79 and 95-104, and is based on the edition by Tolkien (1962).

(B) Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 34, fols 1-80; s xiii 1/4

The manuscript consists of 80 folios and contains five religious prose works, *St Katherine* (fols 1-18), *St Margaret* (fols 18-36), *St Juliana* (fols 36-52), *Hali Meïðhad* (fols 52-71) and *Sawles Warde* (fols 72-80); the last is incomplete. The text is copied by a single scribe, in a small gothic hand that Ker (1960: x) describes as 'more suited to

Latin with its fixed orthography than to English’.

The text contains a large number of alterations by the scribe himself, and, in *St Margaret*, by a contemporary revisor. There are numerous marginal scribbles, including a number of personal names that can be identified with members of the lesser gentry of eastern Herefordshire. These include the Unetts of Castle Frome and Ledbury, the Seabournes of Sutton, the Wyshams of Tedstone Delamere and the Clintons of Castleditch in Eastnor, as well as an unidentified Willelmus Ewyne or Gwyne of Much Cowarne and a member of the Havard family, important in the city of Hereford (Ker 1960: xiv). As Dobson (1976: 117) points out, the names connect the manuscript firmly with the Hereford-Bromyard-Ledbury triangle.

All the texts in the manuscript have been edited (see Laing 1993: 124), and a facsimile edition has been published in the Early English Text Society series (Ker 1960). For the present purpose, the editions by d’Ardenne (1936), Mack (1934) and Millett (1982), as well as the facsimile edition, have been consulted; a full analysis has not been carried out.

Discussion

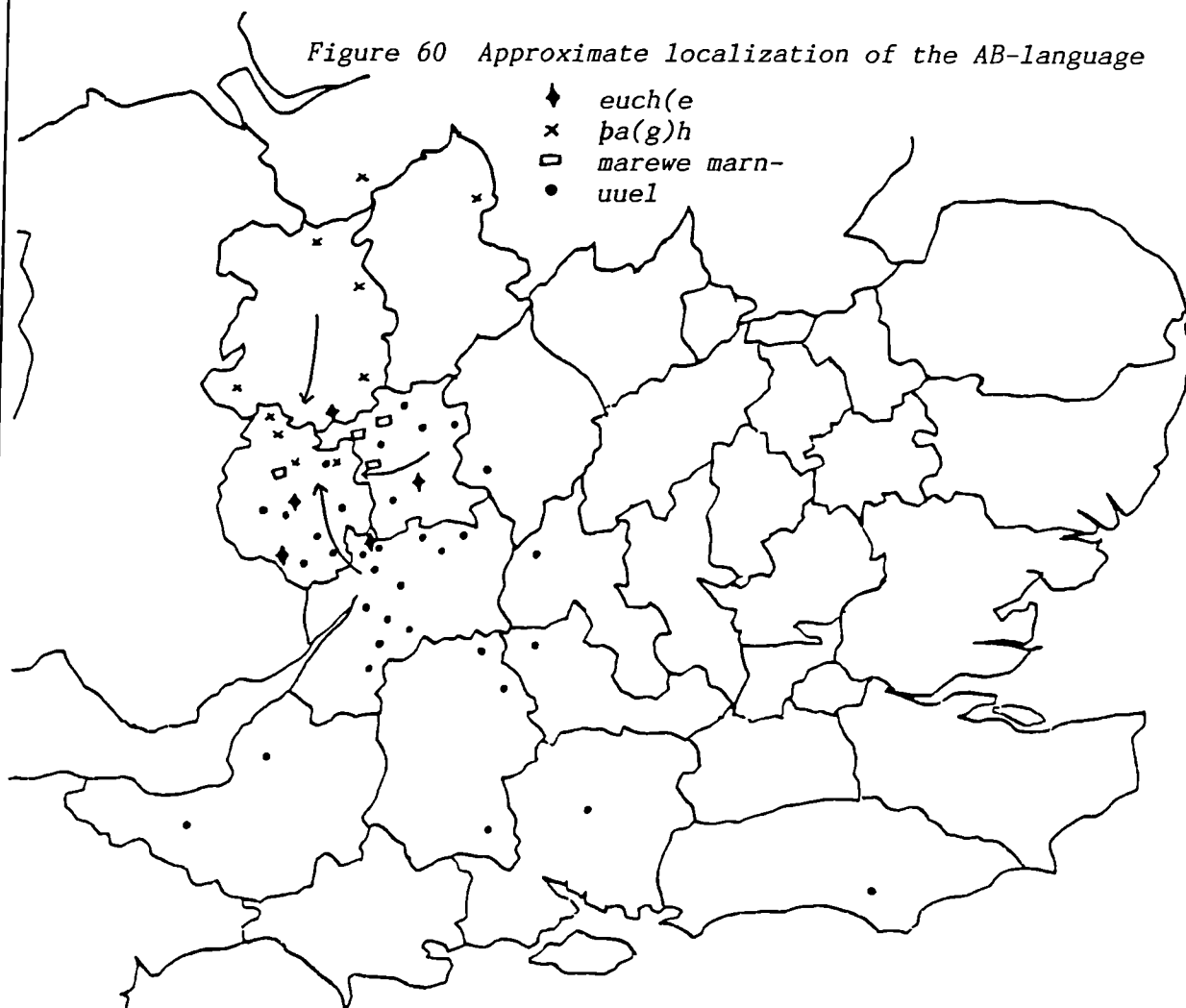
Those forms in AB that may be used as dialect evidence, and compared with the later material, might be listed as follows:

euch ‘each’, *hwuch* ‘which’, *moni(e)* ‘many’, *ei eani eni* ‘any’, *from* ‘from’, *purh* ‘through’, *ah* ‘but’, *3ef* ‘if’, *pah* ‘though’, *aðet* ‘until’, *nawt noht nawiht* ‘not’, *a3ein to3eines* ‘against’, *seolf* ‘self’, *þenne* ‘then’, *þideward* ‘thiderward’, *ehnen* ‘eyes’, *marhen* ‘morning’, *heh* ‘high’, *eask-* ‘ask’, *cleop-* ‘call’, *her-* ‘hear’, *seh* ‘saw’, *sullen* ‘sell’, *mon* ‘man’, *hwet* ‘what’, *neddre* ‘adder’, *dredde* ‘dread *pa*’, *prude* ‘pride’, *fur* ‘fire’, *sunne* ‘sin’, *dude* ‘did’, *inel* ‘evil’, *stude* ‘stead’, *feole* (OE *fela*), *wrahte* ‘work *pa*’, *swide* (OE *swiðe*), *ow* ‘you’, *ha heo* ‘they’, *hare* ‘their’

Comparison of these forms with the *LALME* evidence must, of course, take into consideration that the distributions may have changed in the intervening period. The generally western character of the language is evident from forms like *hwuch*, *mon*, *hwet*, *fur*, *sunne* and so on; a southern localization is excluded by a number of forms like *penne*, *her-*, *neddre*, *dredde*, while several forms, including *euch*, *ehnen*, *marhen*, *feole* and *wrahte* would seem to suggest a very limited area centring on the northern parts of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Figure 60 shows the *LALME* distributions of *euch* 'each', *þa(g)h* 'though', *vuel* 'evil', and spellings of 'morning' with <a>, e.g. *marewe*. While it is likely that at least the distributions of *þa(g)h* and *vuel* have receded during the intervening time, the forms clearly seem to centre on N or NE Herefordshire.

A more detailed picture of the connections with the later material may be obtained by direct comparison of the AB forms with those of other texts localized in this area. Six texts in the *LALME* material are placed in N and NE Herefordshire; these are LPs 7450, 7460, 7500, 7510, 7520 and 9260. To these may be added the two early Herefordshire texts, 7410 and 7440, as well as a fourteenth-century S Shropshire text, MS Lincoln's Inn Hale 150 (LP 4037). Finally, LP 7481, a late text localized in the western border area, may be added for comparison. LP 7510 has been shown to contain essentially the same usage as 7520, and does not need to be compared separately (see p 230); similarly, the usages of 7450 and 7460 are, for this purpose, so similar that they may be combined for clarity. The linguistic usages of these texts, based on a subset of the dialect criteria defined in chapter 4 (see p 242), for which the AB forms are particularly distinctive, are compared in Figure 61 (pp 269-270).

The comparison shows that the AB usage corresponds most closely to that of LP 9260, or MS Harley 2253. That this is not simply due to the early date of the Harley text is shown by comparison with the two even earlier texts, LPs 7440 (MS Jesus 29) and 7410 (the William Herebert manuscript). The former shows a markedly more southern usage; similarly, while the latter lacks a number of forms for comparison, its usage is clearly different from AB. Only the usage of MS Harley 2253 matches closely that of AB; when intervening spelling changes and the variation caused by different exemplars in the Harley text are taken into consideration, the similarity is striking. Most of the forms listed above as suitable for comparison are matched in Harley 2253:



	AW	7410	7440
EACH	euch	oeuch uche euch	vych (ech euch vch)
WHICH	hwuch	whuch	hwich
THROUGH	þurh	þorou(h	þurh (þureh)
BUT	ah	-	ac (ah)
IF	3ef	3yf	if ((yf))
THOUGH	þah	-	þeyh þah
UNTIL	aðet	-	fort
NOT	nawt ((noht))	nouht nout	nouht (noht)
THEN	þenne; þa	þoenne	þenne; þo
MORNING	marhen	-	morewe
HIGH	heh	hey(3e)	heyh heyē
ASK	eask-	-	ax-
EVIL	uuel	-	vuel
STEAD	stude	stoede	stude
WORK <i>pa</i>	i)wrahte	wrouht	wrouhte
THEY	ha ((heo))	hoe	hi he

	7461 [7450]	7481	7500
EACH	[ech]	eche vche	ech(e (((vche)))
WHICH	whuche	which(e	wuch(e
THROUGH	þoro3 [þoruh]	throw > throg	þoru (þor3)
BUT	-	-	ac
IF	3ef	yif	3ef
THOUGH	þou3 (þau3 þo3)	they	þei ((þay þa3))
UNTIL	forto [til]	tyll	forte forto
NOT	no3t ((not))	not	no3t not
THEN	þanne; þo	then; tho	þenne þanne; þo
MORNING	mor(e)we	morne	morwe
HIGH	hy3 [hye]	hye	hey(e
ASK	ax-	ask-	ask- asch-
EVIL	efel yuel	evell	vuel (euel)
STEAD	stude	ste(e)de	stude
WORK <i>pa</i>	wro3t(e	wroght	wro3t(e
	[wrou(g)ht]		
THEY	þei	thei	heo

	9260	4037	7520 [7510]
EACH	vch	vche	uche [eche]
WHICH	whuch	whiche	whuch(e
THROUGH	þourh ((þurh))	þoru3 ((þor3))	þorgh
BUT	ah	-	-
IF	3ef	3ef	3yf
THOUGH	þah	þau3(h) þagh	þagh
UNTIL	o-þat	til	tyl til
NOT	nout ((noht))	nou3t (not no3t)	not (nout no3t)
THEN	þenne; þo	þenne þan; þo	þanne; þo
MORNING	marewe	-	morwe
HIGH	heh	hy3(e hey3(e	hiegh [hegh]
ASK	ask-	ask- (ax-)	ask- ax-
EVIL	e(o)uel	e(o)uel	yuel (euel)
STEAD	stude	stude steode	stude
WORK <i>pa</i>	ywraht	-	wro3t(e
THEY	hue he heo	þey heo	þay

Figure 61: Comparison between AB and later Herefordshire texts

whuch, muche(l, mony moni(e, eny any eni ani, from, þourh þurh, ah, 3ef, þah, o-þat, nout noht nowyht, a3eyn to-geynes, self, þenne, þideward, e3enen, marewe, heh, ask-, clep- cleop-, her-, seh, sulle, mon, whet, prude, fur, summe, dude, stude, fele feole, ywraht, swyþe sryþe swiþe, ou, hue he heo, heore hare

Significant differences include Harley *vch* against AB *euch*, *streynþe* against *strengðe*, *fleysh* against *flesch*, *aungles* against *engles* and *euel* against *vuel*. Some of these differences may be assumed to reflect receding distributions, including the form *vuel*,

which seems to recede southward during the ME period; the form *aungles*, on the other hand, is the usual fourteenth-century form. Assuming a minimum of intervening change, the forms in Harley 2253 might be seen to suggest a very slightly more northern usage; however, considering the different dates and types of text involved, and their very different textual backgrounds, in particular the diverse dialectal backgrounds of the texts in Harley 2253 (see p 235), the differences are very few indeed.

Of the later material, the nearest matches seem to be LP 7500, the S Shropshire LP 4037 and, in particular, LPs 7510 and 7520. Most differences between the two latter LPs and the AB usage can be explained either by intervening change or by the textual backgrounds of 7510 and 7520, both of which seem to represent translations from eastern texts (see pp 222, 227). The similarity between the usages of 7510, 7520 and Harley 2253 was already noted in chapter 4 (see p 230).

It seems that the AB usage, as found in MSS Corpus 402 and Bodley 34, is much more closely related to these three later texts than to any other. Interestingly, both MSS Harley 2253 (LP 9260) and Oxford, St John's College 6 (LP 7510) have strong local connections with the same limited geographical area: as noted in chapter 4, MS Harley 2253 is connected with Ludlow (and, possibly, Leominster), while MS St John's College 6 was produced for a family in Leinthall (see pp 215, 231-2). The village of Wigmore, with which MS Corpus 402 is associated, lies only about six miles southwest of Ludlow, with the Leinthall lands situated exactly between the two. That the manuscript connections of three texts of clearly related usage, each of a different century, should all point to an area of less than ten miles' radius can hardly be a coincidence.

Including the manuscripts that have clear linguistic connections with these, a considerable cluster of texts, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, may be assumed to reflect the usage of the same limited area. The usage of Corpus 402 (A) cannot be separated from that of Bodley 34 (B); similarly, the usage of the Marquess of Bath's MS 5 (LP 7520) is closely related to that of LP 7510. It would seem that all texts in this cluster should be taken to reflect the usage of a single area, and, considering both the linguistic evidence and the manuscript associations, this might be identified with the area around Ludlow, Wigmore and Leinthall, the medieval Mortimer lordship in the borderlands of Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Corrections and variant forms in MSS A and B

An interesting aspect of AB, which has received little attention, involves the numerous corrections and variant forms that are present in both texts, and especially in B. These are minor in comparison with the material as a whole, and have tended to be either ignored or systematically explained away by earlier editors, particularly d'Ardenne (1936); however, many appear so regularly throughout the texts that they can hardly be insignificant. A full study of these is not possible here; however, a quick scan through the footnotes of editions of the texts (Mack 1934; d'Ardenne 1936; Tolkien 1962; Bennett and Smithers 1968: 246-259; Millett 1982) suggests a number of regularly occurring spelling slips. Only the most frequent are noted here. Three of these occur both in A and B:

- 1) <o> for <eo> and vice versa: e g *houene* for *heouene*, *þrofald* for *þreofald* (A); *drori* for *dreori*, *broken* for *breoken* (B); *weohes* for *wohes*, *grot* for *grot* (A); *weordes* for *wordes*, *þreof* for *þrof* (B)
- 2) confusion of <ð> and <d>: e g *neoð* for *neod*, *heaeuð* for *heaued* (A); *meiðen* for *meiden*, *freonð* for *freond*, *ðredeð* for *dredeð* (B); *eider* for *eider*, *oder* for *oðer* (A); *adet* for *aðet* (B); also of ð and dd: *goð* for *godd*, *laddliche* for *laðliche* (B)
- 3) confusion of <þ> and <h>: e g *þorn* for *horn* (A); *þis* for *his*, *þe* for *he* (B); *flih* for *flið* (A); *his* for *þis*, *him* for *þin* (B).

The following types are found only or mainly in B, where especially types 4-7 are very common indeed:

- 4) <e> for expected <ea>: e g *wontreðe* for *wontreade*, *erst* for *earst*, *biheste* for *biheaste*
- 5) correction of <e> to <ea>: e g *be<a>rnde*, *che<a>rre*, *e<a>skest*, *he<a>hest*, *spe<a>rie*, *sche<a>fies*, *e<a>rnnesse* for *earnnesse*, *e<a>rnnesse*, *e<a>rnin*, *þre<a>l*, *he<a>lewi*

- 6) correction of <a> to <ea>: e g *wl<e>ateful*
- 7) doubling of single consonants and, occasionally, vice versa: *soffte* for *softe*,
effter for *efter*, *deorrewurðe* for *deorewurðe*, *illke* for *ilke*, *bearnninde*
for *bearninde*, *godd* for *god* ‘good’, *hiss* for *his*, *worlddes* for *worldes*,
eorððe for *eorðe*, *gledd* for *gled*; *stute* for *stutte*, *segen* for *seggen*,
drechunge for *drecchunge*, *seorhfuliche* for *seorhfulliche*
- 8) addition of unetymological *hw*: *hwenden* for *wenden*, *unhwiht* for *unwiht*,
hwhile for *while*

For the most often cited type of minor variant in AB, <o> for OE /a:/, the present search has noted only one form, *drof* ‘drove’ in *St Juliana* (B), cited both by d’Ardenne (1936: 190) and Dobson (1972: lxxxii n 3). It appears that all the variants that occur only or mainly in B, unlike the shared ones, reflect a discrepancy between the spelling conventions and the scribe’s own language. Types 4-6 involve the most volatile part of AB orthography, the use of the vowel symbols <e>, <ea> and <a> to make a three-way distinction both in the short and long vowel systems. For the long vowels, the distinction appears in a number of EME texts, but the short vowel distinction is virtually restricted to AB; its significance will be discussed in chapter 6 (see p 367, 368 ff). It seems that the B scribe struggled to maintain this distinction. The other errors typical of B, types 7 and 8, also seem to reflect a difference between the scribe’s own usage and that of his exemplar: in particular, type 8 suggests a loss of the distinction between *hw* and *w* in the scribe’s usage, and might indicate that the latter represented a somewhat more eastern and/or southern dialect in relation to AB.

The first three types of variation, which appear in both texts, are of some interest. Type 1 seems to represent a connection with alternative thirteenth-century spelling conventions. In the EME period, <o> spellings for <eo> are common in parts of the Southwest Midland area, especially Gloucestershire; they occur regularly in the L2 usage of MS Lambeth 487 (see pp 278-79), in the C1 usage of MS Caligula A ix (see p 285) and in MS Nero A xiv (N), and appear as minor variants in a large number of texts (see p 338). The appearance of these spellings in AB, even as minor variants, suggests that the

usage is not quite as regular and independent of other influences as is often assumed.

Perhaps the most interesting types, however, are 3 and 4. These seem to be geographically very restricted, and to have a particular connection with AB and related texts. Type 2 occurs also in the C2 usage of MS Caligula MS A ix (C), which is closely related to AB (see pp 289-90); type 3 occurs in a number of SWML texts and is particularly frequent in Harley 2253 (LP 9260), a similarity that reinforces further the dialectal connection between this text and AB.

The confusion of <d> and <ð> could be explained with the similarity of the letter shapes and the obsolescence of ð; in thirteenth- and fourteenth century documents, the not infrequent use of <d> for <ð> has often been explained with the influence of Anglo-Norman or Latin orthography (see Clark 1992 and references there cited). While these explanations are plausible, an interesting parallel with medieval Welsh orthography might also be noted. Evans (1976: 7) notes that, in the fourteenth century, as well as earlier, 'the most notable features of the [Welsh] orthography... are *t* for *-d*, *d* for *-ð*, *c* for *-g*... No distinction is usually made between *d* and *ð*, except when they occur finally... [gradually] *ð* came to be represented by *dd*, which is the regular notation in ModW'. The spelling *laddliche* 'loathsomely' in *St Juliana* may be noted here; there is a possible parallel in the spelling *kloddyng* 'clothing' in the late fourteenth-century Swynderby papers (LP 7401/2), which seem to contain an element of Welsh orthography (see pp 175, 177). As with many features of medieval English and Welsh usage, it may be difficult or impossible to assess the direction of influence; however, the parallel is of some interest, especially when seen in conjunction with the Welsh element in the 'AB-group' vocabulary (see p 380).

5.2.4 The Lambeth homilies

The homilies in MS Lambeth 487, dated to *ca* 1200, contain the earliest English dialectal usage that has been localized, on linguistic grounds, in Herefordshire (see p 258). The manuscript contains seventeen homilies, followed by the *Poema Morale* and *On Ureison of Ure Loverde*; the last text is in a different, somewhat later, hand. The contents were edited by Morris (1867), whose numbering of the homilies is used here. The collection is a composite one, put together from different sources. Homilies IX and X are derived from Ælfric, and several others (I, II, III, XI) seem to go back to OE exemplars; others are of post-Conquest origin (Sisam 1951: 105, 110 n 4).

It has been shown by Sisam (1951) that the language of the texts is not uniform, and that it seems to reflect differences in the scribe's exemplar(s). Sisam divides the homilies into two main groups, consisting of nos I-V and IX-XIII on the one hand (group L1) and VII, VIII, XIV-XVII and the *Poema Morale* on the other (group L2).⁴² The breaks between the groups are followed by short mixed stretches, which may be assumed to contain a working-in, or transfer, usage produced by the scribe while becoming used to a new set of forms. Sisam (1951: 108) further subdivides group L1 into three subgroups.

A full dialectal analysis of the Lambeth homilies is beyond the scope of this study; the aim is simply to supplement Sisam's work with some additional data that can be compared with the later Herefordshire material. For this purpose, the following samples have been analysed: homilies III, XI (group L1) and VII, VIII, XVI, XVII (group L2).

The most notable difference between the two groups is the archaic character of the orthography of L1, which, taken on its own, might be described as transitional rather than Middle English. For example, it frequently retains OE <a> in unstressed vowels, e.g. *noma*, *seggað*, *herian*, as well as the symbols <cw>, <sc> and sometimes <c>, <g> for palatal consonants: so *cweð*, *scal*, *ilca*, *iwilc*, *ge* 'ye', *git* 'yet'. A also retains features of OE morphology that have generally disappeared in ME, such as the inflected infinitive (*to donne*, *understondene*, *habbene*). In contrast, the L2 usage contains no particularly archaic features in comparison with the SWML thirteenth-century material.

According to Sisam (1951: 111), the two groups 'do not seem to differ radically

in dialect’ although they differ in orthography, and L1 shows ‘an older language’. The separation of ‘dialect’ from ‘orthography’ is based on pre-*LALME* concepts of dialect criteria; however, an analysis with the present questionnaire likewise seems to suggest that both usages may be related to a single area. First of all, there is a substantial core of common usage. The following distinctive forms, at least, occur regularly, with few or no minor variants, both in L1 and L2:

muchel(e ‘much’, *moni*(e ‘many’, *þet-ilke* ‘the same’, *mare* ‘more’, *from* ‘fram’, *þurh* ‘through’, *ah* ‘but’, *bute*(n ‘but’, *þenne* ‘than’, *er* ‘ere’, *oðer* ‘or’, *ne* ‘nor’, *nawiht naut noht* ‘not’, *hwile* ‘while’, *þridde* ‘third’, *e3en* ‘eyes’, *chirche* ‘church’, *a3en*(e ‘own’, *3efe*(n ‘give’, *3elden* ‘yield’, *riht* ‘right’, *mon* ‘man’, *þonk-* ‘thank’, *engel* ‘angel’, *efter* ‘after’, *þet* ‘that’, *wes* ‘was’, *feder* ‘father’, *mei* ‘may’, *seide* ‘said’, *neddre* ‘adder’, *sunne* ‘sin’, *uuel* ‘evil’, *stude* ‘stead’, Av suffix *-liche*, *hire* ‘her’, *hit* ‘it’, *i-* (OE *ge-*), *scal* ‘shall’, *sculen* ‘shall’ (pl), *walde* ‘would’, *ma3en mu3en* ‘may’ (pl), *habbe*(n ‘have’, *segge*(n ‘say’, *haueð* ‘has’, *seið* ‘says’, *deð* ‘does’

The following forms occur in both parts but are fully dominant only in L1:

þah ‘though’, *3if* ‘if’, *hwenne* ‘when’, *hwet* ‘what’, *hefde* ‘had’, *ic* ‘I’, *heo* ‘she/they’, *heore* ‘their’, *heom* ‘them’, *beoð* ‘are’

These forms suggest a usage very similar to AB, the differences involving mainly purely orthographic features (W-features). Most notably, L lacks the most idiosyncratic features of the AB orthography, the use of <ea> for short vowels and the <h> spelling for the intervocalic fricative in words like *mahen*; similarly, L does not observe the conventional distinctions typical of AB, e.g. between *godd* / *god* and *oþer* / *oðer*.⁴³

Where the two parts differ, L1 tends to show more archaic usage, while some forms exclusive to L2 suggest a slightly different regional element. The most distinctive differences are shown in Figure 62.

Item	L1	L2
EACH	uwilc ewilche	ech
WHICH	wulche hwlche	hwiche
SUCH	swilche swulche	swuch swiche
IF	3if	if ((3ef))
AGAIN(ST	on-3ein	a3ein(es
I	ic	ich ic
YOUR	eower	ower
YOU	eow eou heou	ow
THEY	heo	ho heo
PRES <i>pl</i>	-(i)að	-(i)eð
ARE	beoð	boð
MAY <i>pl</i>	ma3en	mu3e(n
MIGHT	maht-	miht-
OE CW-	cw-	qu-
OE SCH-	sc-	sch- sc-

Figure 62: Differences between the L1 and L2 stretches in Lambeth 487

The differences are in most cases systemic, relating to the spelling of particular classes of words or sounds rather than individual items: so <eo> and final <lch> in L1 correspond to <o> and <ch> in L2. Many of the archaic features of L1 are likely simply to reflect the OE origins of the texts. The L2 part, on the other hand, seems to reflect a constrained translation from a more southern dialect, much less closely related to AB. This is suggested by the regularly occurring forms *ech* ‘each’, *hwiche* ‘which’, *swiche* ‘such’, *mu3(en* ‘may’ (pl) and *beh pech beb* ‘though’, as well as minor variants like *hwan(ne* ‘when’, *man* ‘man’. The four homilies of the L2 sample also show certain differences of usage, which seem to indicate different textual histories. For example, only item VIII contains a very large proportion of initial *u-* for *f-*, while only item XVII shows syncopated present 3 sg in non-dental stems (e g *specð* ‘speaks’, *kimð* ‘comes’). Again, both features suggest exemplars in a more southern dialect.

The differences between L1 and L2 may be taken to demonstrate, to a modest degree, the two types of written English in the EME period, versions of OE texts and new ME writings (see p 254). However, all of them cannot be explained simply in terms of date. A large number of the L1 forms, except for the most archaic ones, appear as minor variants in L2, and it is quite possible that these shared forms reflect the scribe’s own preferred usage. Should this be the case, the less traditional features in L2 may be assumed to reflect an earlier stage of transmission.⁴⁴

A precise localization of the Lambeth text is hardly feasible, considering its early date and the traditional element present in it. However, certain general suggestions may be made. The shared usage, which comprises the majority of the forms, agrees with the AB-language in most features, except for some conventional detail of orthography, and fits in the same general area in the N Herefordshire - S Shropshire borderlands. It may be assumed to represent the scribe’s own usage, while the archaic element in L1 and the typically more southern forms in L2 presumably go back to his exemplars. The shared usage might, then, with due caution, be used as evidence for the dialect of the N Herefordshire area *ca* 1200.

5.2.5 The friars' miscellanies

All the 'AB-group' texts discussed above date from the first half of the thirteenth century. During the century, the conservative tradition present in these texts is gradually replaced by other, more progressive spelling systems. This development is already seen in some of the early manuscripts of the 'AB group', in particular the text of the *Ancrene Riwe* in MS Cotton Nero A xiv (N; see Smith 1991: 64-65). A particularly striking illustration of the changes that take place during the thirteenth century is provided by the second group of SWML texts listed above, the four so-called friars' miscellanies (see pp 256, 258).

All the four MSS, Cotton Caligula A ix (C), Jesus 29 (J), Digby 86 (D) and Trinity 323 (T), have been dated to the second half of the thirteenth century and, as far as they have been localized, seem to belong to a very limited area encompassing E Herefordshire, W Worcestershire and NW Gloucestershire. They are related in style and content: all are bi- or trilingual, and contain a great variety of material, mainly verse, including both secular and religious texts. There are substantial overlaps: the poems *Doomsday* and *Death* are shared by all four manuscripts, and a large number of items are shared by two or three (see Laing 1993). Despite these close connections, the texts differ considerably in orthography, and seem to reflect very different positions in relation to the thirteenth-century development.

MSS C and J are of particular interest, as they share a large amount of text that seems to derive from a common ancestor (Atkins 1922/1971: xxxiii). The relationship of the texts has long been known; however, as earlier studies relied on now outdated assumptions about ME dialects and scribes, a new consideration will be of interest. The two manuscripts will be discussed in turn below, after which their spelling systems will be related to those of the other miscellanies and to the thirteenth-century material as a whole.

The manuscripts

(C) London, British Library Cotton Caligula A ix, fols 233-249r; s xiii 4/4

The manuscript consists of 259 folios, of which 3-194 originally formed a separate manuscript, and contain La3amon's *Brut*. The second part, fols 195-261, contains a miscellany, mainly of verse, in French and English. The English text contains the following items (see also Laing 1993: 69-70):

- | | | |
|---------|-----------|---|
| 1) fols | 233r-246r | <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i> |
| 2) | 246r-v | <i>Long Life or Death's Wither-Clench</i> |
| 3) | 246v | <i>An Orison to Our Lady</i> |
| 4) | 246v | <i>Will and Wit</i> |
| 5) | 26v-247r | <i>Doomsday</i> |
| 6) | 247r-248v | <i>Death or The Latemest Day</i> |
| 7) | 248v | <i>The Ten Abuses</i> |
| 8) | 248v-249r | <i>Litel Soth Sermun</i> |

The English texts are written in a single hand, described by Ker (1963: xvi) as "professional", a skilled close gothic'; the two hands of the Jesus and Caligula manuscripts are considered by him to be 'as different as two English bookhands of about the same date can be'. All the individual English texts, except for the latter part of item 3 and the short item 4, are also found in J; the three French texts on fols 195-229 and 249-261 (*Life of St Josaphat, the Seven Sleepers* and *Le Petit Plet*) are also shared with J, although not in the same order. For texts shared with other manuscripts, see Laing (1993: 158-164).

The present analysis is based, for item 1, on the Early English Text Society facsimile edition (Ker 1963) and, for items 2-8, on the edition by Morris (1872: 156-192, left pages only). The analysis is exhaustive, and all items were analysed separately to begin with.

(J) 7440 Oxford, Jesus College 29, part II, fols 144r-195r, 198r-900v; s xiii 4/4
(LALME 7440)

The manuscript consists of 114 folios, and contains a miscellany, mainly of verse, in English and French. The English text contains the following items (see also Laing 1993: 145-46):

1)	fols 144-155	<i>The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ</i>
2)	156-168v	<i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>
3)	169-174v	<i>Poema morale</i>
4)	175-178v	<i>Sinners beware or The Sayings of St Bede</i>
5)	178v-179v	<i>The Woman of Samaria</i>
6)	179v	<i>Weal</i>
7)	179v-180v	<i>Long Life or Death's wither-clench</i>
8)	180v	<i>An Orison to Our Lady</i> , ending imperfectly
9)	181r	<i>A Song of the Annunciation</i> (end of item 19)
10)	181r-v	<i>The Five Blissess</i>
11)	181v-182	<i>Hwon holy chireche is vnder uote</i>
12)	182r-v	<i>Doomsday</i>
13)	182v-184v	<i>Death or The Latemest Day</i>
14)	184v	<i>The Ten Abuses</i>
15)	185r-v	<i>A lutel soth sermun</i>
16)	185v	<i>Antiphon of St Thomas the Martyr</i>
17)	185v-187	<i>Hwi ne serve we Crist?</i>
18)	187-188v	<i>Loue ron</i> by Friar Thomas de Hale
19)	188v	<i>Song of the Annunciation</i> (ends fol 181r)
20)	189	A fragment on Doomsday
21)	189	<i>Signs of death</i>
22)	189	<i>Three Sorrowful Tidings</i>
23)	189-192	<i>The Proverbs of Alfred</i>
24)	192-193	<i>An Orison to Our Lord</i>
25)	193-194	<i>Soþe Lume</i>
26)	194-195	Prose on the shires and hundreds of England
29)	198-200v	<i>The XI Pains of Hell</i>

The manuscript is bound together with an originally separate fifteenth-century Latin chronicle of the Kings of England. The text is written in one hand throughout, described by Ker (1963: xvi) as "amateur", admirably plain and simple... not essentially different from a twelfth-century hand'. Items 2, 7-8 and 12-15 are shared with C.

The present analysis is based, for items 1 and 3-29, on the edition by Morris

(1872: 37-191) and, for item 2, on the Early English Text Society facsimile edition (Ker 1963). The analysis is exhaustive, and all items, except for very short texts, were initially analysed separately.

The relationship of the two texts

The language of the two texts, in particular the shared poem *The Owl and the Nightingale*, has received considerable attention in the past. The most important early studies are those by Breier (1910) and Atkins (1922); shorter treatments include Grattan and Sykes (1935) and Stanley (1960). The main linguistic features of the two texts and their relationship are well known, and may be summarized briefly. MS C contains a composite text, which seems to be copied *literatim*, or nearly so, from an exemplar containing the usage of more than one scribe; most notably, the text of *The Owl and the Nightingale* contains two distinct usages of very different types. J derives from a shared ancestor with C, whether or not the immediate exemplar of either text; this text must have contained the two different usages, as J also shows traces of them.

MS C was long considered to date from the first half of the thirteenth century, and thus to be much earlier than J. This view is rejected by Ker (1963: ix), according to whom 'it is not possible to say that one manuscript is earlier than the other... The difference between the hands is a difference of kind, not of date'. Earlier scholars tended, however, to explain the differences between C and J mainly or wholly in terms of diachronic change. Similarly, the more archaic character of C2 usage in the Caligula text (see p 289 ff) has been taken to reflect the usage of an earlier date, conserved by more faithful transmission; Atkins (1922: xxx) suggests that this might be 'the text faithfully reproduced in its original form as it left the author's pen.' However, the assumption that a more archaic language must reflect an earlier date does not necessarily hold; as Margaret Laing's (1992) study of the *Poema Morale* shows, the converse may be the case.

Some past views about the dialect of the texts were similarly based on assumptions no longer tenable. The statement by Burrow and Turville-Petre (1992: 80)

that the language of the C version of *The Owl and the Nightingale* represents ‘the poet’s own South-Eastern English (perhaps that of Guildford in Surrey) overlaid with other Southern features’ echoes Grattan’s view that the poem, as it stands, represents ‘a form of the Surrey dialect’ (Grattan and Sykes 1935: xviii). Grattan based his view on rhyming evidence only; most other scholars, including Atkins (1922) and Stanley (1960) have differentiated between rhyming and non-rhyming practice, and placed the latter usages both C and J in the Southwest Midland area (but see p 290-91 below).

A more precise localization of the respective usages has now been made possible by the availability of the *LALME* network of localized texts. As one of the early manuscripts included in *LALME*, J was localized E Herefordshire; according to Margaret Laing (1993: 147), the language would fit equally well in NW Gloucestershire. The following studies of the two texts will include attempts to localize the internally consistent usages found in each of them; as the dialectal structure of C is of relevance for the study of J, it will be discussed first.

The C text (MS Caligula A ix)

The composite character of the Caligula text of *The Owl and the Nightingale* has been known at least since Breier’s (1910) study. While the manuscript is the work of a single scribe, its linguistic usage undergoes abrupt changes, which seem to reflect the *literatim*, or near-*literatim* copying of an exemplar produced by more than one scribe. The usage changes three times during the text, with the changes clear-cut enough to be pinpointed fairly precisely. The first two take place at lines 902 and 962; the third is given variously as 1175 (Grattan and Sykes 1935: xvii) and 1183 (Atkins 1922: xxix). The present analysis suggests that the change takes place at line 1175 at the latest.⁴⁵

The main differences of usage are shown in Figure 63. The C1 usage is based on the relevant stretches of *The Owl and the Nightingale* (lines 1-901, 962-1174) while the shorter C2 stretches (lines 902-961, 1175-1794) are supplemented by items 5 and 6 in the manuscript (*Doomsday* and *Death*), which show very similar usage. As the table

Item	C1	C2
EACH	ech(e	euch(e
SUCH	suich(e	swuch swucche
BUT	ac	ah
THOUGH	þe3	þah
ERE	ar	ear
YET	3ut	3et
AGAINST	a3en a3enes	a3ein a3eines
SELF	sulue	seolue
OWN	owe o3ene	ahene ohen
ANSWER	an(d)suare -ere	ondswear e ondswar-
SAID	sede seide	seide
OE FELA	fele	feole
THEY	hi	heo
THEIR	hore	heore
ARE	bop	beoð beod
MAY <i>pl</i>	mu3e	mahen mohe
SHOULD	sholde solde	schulde
WOULD	wolde	walde
OE WOT	wot	wat
OE WH-	w- ((wh-))	hw- ((w-))
OE CW-	qu- [e g <i>quene</i>]	cw- [e g <i>cweme</i>]

Figure 63: Differences between the C1 and C2 stretches in Caligula A ix (II)

shows, the C1 and C2 usages differ considerably. Apart from such S-feature differences that scribes of ME texts commonly reproduce from their exemplars (e.g. *3et* vs *3ut*), the differences include orthographic detail; for example, C1 regularly shows <o>, <qu> and <su> where C2 has <eo>, <cw> and <sw>. The differences even include the use of a particular symbol, *eth*, in C2 only, as well as some practices of abbreviation (see Atkins 1922: xxvi). This suggests that the scribe reproduces the two separate systems of spelling with considerable accuracy. However, the two sets are not reproduced entirely unmixed. In particular, forms typical of C1 occur as minor variants throughout the C2 part; the opposite is less common. Also, while the points where the usage changes stand out clearly, the language is slightly mixed at the beginning of each new stretch.⁴⁶

Benskin and Laing (1981: 65) note that the scribe seems to have ‘superimposed some of his own habits indifferently on the text of both scribes’; such features might include the minor-variant ending *-et* for final *-ep* *-eð*, which seems to occur with roughly equal frequency throughout both parts. However, considering the regularity with which the scribe reproduces the detail of each spelling system, his own contribution to the usage as it stands must be assumed to be very small indeed.

Of the shorter poems, items 3 and 5-6 (*An Orison to Our Lady, Will and Wit, Doomsday* and *Death*) show a usage virtually identical to the C2 stretches of *The Owl and the Nightingale*. Items 2 (*Long life*) and 8 (*Litel soth sermun*) show features of both, while items 4 and 7 are too short to be considered.

The C1 usage

The C1 usage is markedly less conservative than C2, and contains a large number of distinctive forms that can be related to later distribution patterns. As it is also relatively consistent within itself, a rough localization may be attempted, by comparison with the *LALME* material. Several regularly used forms, like *lutel* ‘little’ and *vuel* ‘evil’, as well as frequent <o> in words like *mon* ‘man’, define the usage as western, while a large number of forms, including *pe3* ‘though’, *a3en* ‘against’, *sulue* ‘self’, *hi* ‘they’ and *solde* ‘should’ limit the usage to an area no more northern than N Gloucestershire. On the

other hand, forms like *mon* would preclude a localization in S Gloucestershire. Assuming that the distributions of these forms have not shifted greatly between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the most likely localization would be N Gloucestershire (see Figure 64).

The text also contains a number of dialectal forms that show very restricted distributions in the *LALME* material. These include forms of the types *fron* ‘from’, *hon* ‘them’, *whonene* ‘whence’ and *hore* ‘their’; as Figure 65 shows, these occur together only in the N Gloucestershire area suggested above. A large number of other forms are typical for the later Gloucestershire material, if not confined to it; so *ar* ‘ere’, *fort* ‘until’, *þe* ‘or’, *3ut* ‘yet’, *sulf sulue* ‘self’ and *fale* (OE *fela*).

Finally, a comparison with the individual *LALME* texts localized in this area shows a particular similarity between C1 and three LPs, 7080, 7100 and 7110 (see Figure 66); these three texts, two of which are versions of Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*, are localized in the central part of N Gloucestershire, roughly in the Gloucester and Cheltenham areas⁴⁷. Apart from individual distinctive forms, the texts share a considerable number of distinctive spelling features, including the use of <u> for *w* in certain contexts and the regular spelling *w-* for OE *hw-*. In particular, C1 shares a number of very distinctive forms with LP 7080, including forms like *an* ‘and’ and *þe* ‘or’.

All the evidence seems to suggest that the C1 usage should be localized in N Gloucestershire; as it agrees particularly closely with the *LALME* LPs 7080, 7100 and 7110, it may be assumed to reflect the dialect of the area in which these are placed. Virtually all the forms in C1 agree with this localization. A very small number of minor variants agree with the C2 usage (e.g. *euch* ‘each’, *noht* ‘not’); for the occasional variant *hi* ‘she’ see p 290 below. On the whole, however, the C1 usage may be considered to represent an internally consistent Southwest Midland usage, localizable in the Gloucester-Cheltenham area.

Figure 64 Approximate localization of the C1 stretch

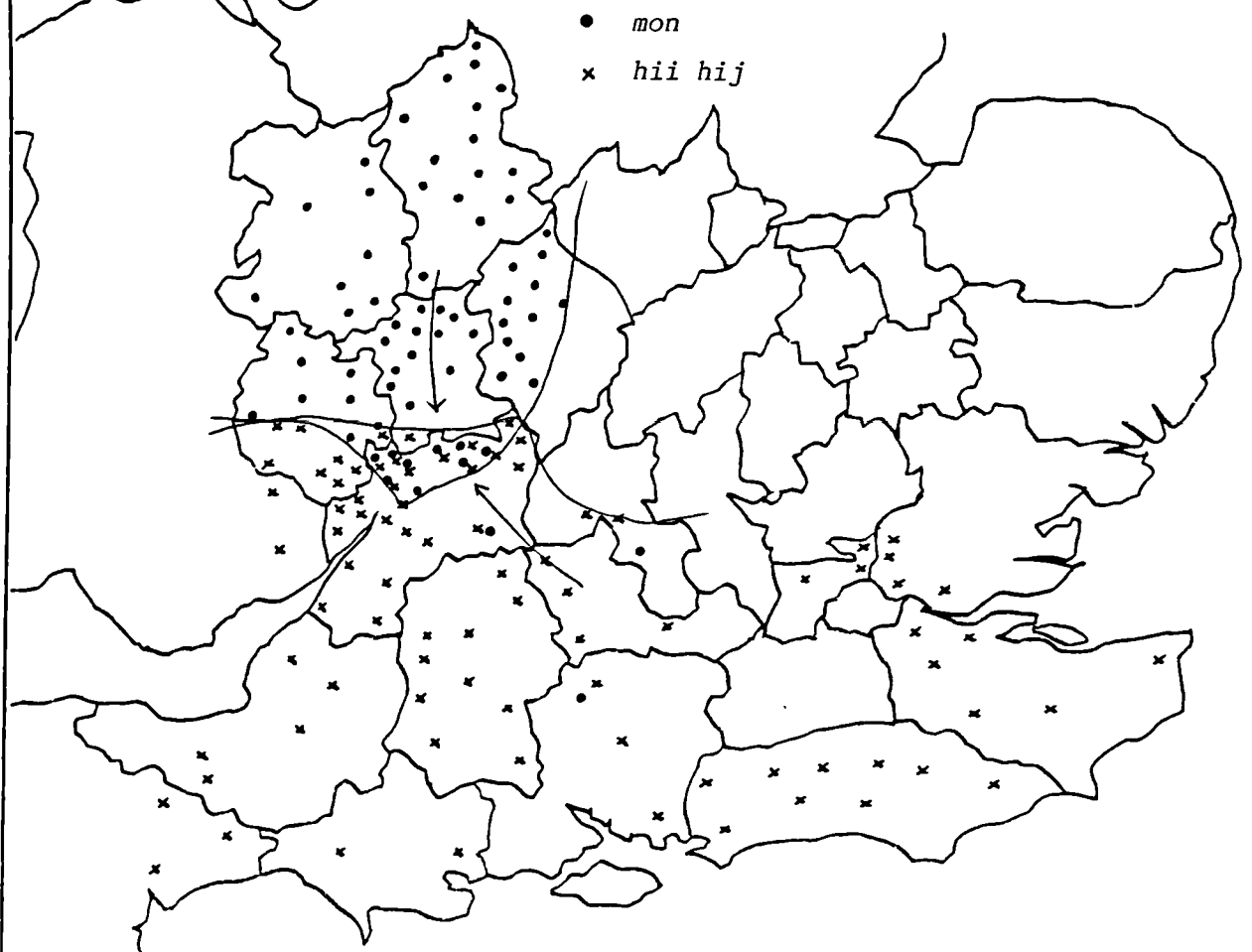


Figure 65 Rare forms in C1



Item	C1	LP 7100	LP 7080	LP 7110
EACH	ech(e	ech(e	ech(e	ech(e
SUCH	suich(e	su(i)ch	such(e	su(i)che
THROUGH	þur3	þor3 þoru	þoru	þor3 þur3
THOUGH	þe3	þei	þey	þei þe3
ERE	ar er	ar er	ar er	ar er
YET	3et 3ut	3ut	3ut	3ut 3et
AGAINST	a3en	a3e(n	a3en	a3ein
SELF	sulf	sulf	sulf	sulf
WHENCE	whonene	wanene	wanene	wanene
OWN	owe o3e-	owe	owe	owe
ASK	aish-	ess- esch-	ess-	ess- esch-
SAW	ise3	isei3	y)sey	ysei3
WH-	w-	w-	w-	w-
F-	v-	v-	v-	v- u-
MAN	man mon	man mon	man mon	man mon
EVIL	vuel(e	vuel	vuel(e	vuele
STEAD	stede	stede stude	stede stude	stede (stude)
TWO	tueie two	tueietuo tw-	tueye tuo	tueye tuo
THEY	hi	hii	hij	hij hii
THEIR	hore	hor(e	((hor))	hor
SHOULD	s(h)olde	ssolde	s(s)olde	ssolde

Figure 66: Comparison between C1 and LPs 7080, 7100 and 7110

The C2 usage

It was noted above that the more archaic character of the C2 stretch has led some scholars to assume that it reflects an earlier copying stage than C1, possibly even authorial usage (Atkins 1922: xxx). The C2 stretch contains a sprinkling of minor variants that stand out as distinct from its regular usage but agree with that of C1; when these are excluded, the language is very similar to the AB-language, as is shown by the following list of distinctive forms:

euch ‘each’, *swuch swucche* ‘such’, *hwuch hwucche* ‘which’, *much(e)* ‘much’, *moni(e)* ‘many’, *ei eni* ‘any’, *nowðer* ‘neither’, *from* ‘from’, *þurh þurch þurp* ‘through’, *ah* ‘but’, *3ef* ‘if’, *seoððe* ‘since’, *þah* ‘though’, *noht nawt nawiht* ‘not’, *a3ein a3eines* ‘against’, *seolf* ‘self’, *þenne* ‘then’, *chirche* ‘church’, *heh* ‘high’, *ahene* ‘own’, *cleop-* ‘call’, *her-* ‘hear’, *isehe* ‘seen’, *inoh innoh* ‘enough’, *mon* ‘man’, *ondswear ondsvar-* ‘answer’, *engeles* ‘angels’, *-creft* ‘craft’, *seide* ‘said’, *prude* ‘pride’, *fur* ‘fire’, *lutel* ‘little’, *sunne* ‘sin’, *uuel* ‘evil’, *feole* ‘OE *fela*’, *swipe swuþe* ‘OE *swiðe*’, *ower* ‘your’, *ow* ‘you’, *heo* ‘they’, *heore* ‘their’, *beoð beod* ‘are’, *wule wulle* ‘will’, *walde* ‘would’, *wat* ‘OE *wat*’, *mahen mohe* ‘may *pl*’, *hafð haueð* ‘has’

These may be compared with the list of forms in AB (see p 266). Apart from the individual forms gathered with the questionnaire, the following general patterns of spelling may also be noted to correspond with AB usage:

<a> for OE /a:/ in *lauerd*, *þa*, *hwase*, *hali*, *gan*, *ouergan*, *la*, *wat*

<ea> for OE /æ:/ in *dead*, *deað*, *eaue*, *neauer*, *reades*

- <eo> in Class IV strong verbs: *beore*, *3eouen*
- <e> as marker of palatal initial: *scheop* ‘created’
- <cw> in words like *cwalm*, *cwed*, *cwelle*, *icweme*
- <dd> in spelling of ‘God’: *goddd*, *goddspel*, *goddspelle*
- <h> in words like *lohe*, *mahe*, *for-swolehen*, *ahene*, *drahe*, *islahe*

Interestingly, certain distinctive fluctuations of spelling, typical for AB, are also found in C2, but not in C1; these include interchange of <ð> and <d>, as well as between <h> and <p> (see p 272, 274). Together with distinctive AB spellings like *goddd*, these suggest a very close relationship between C2 and the usage of MSS A, B and R.

The main systemic departure from AB is the restriction of the digraph <ea> to the long vowel (e.g. *dead*, *reades* but *askedest*, *fader*), agreeing with the usage of MS R (Royal 17 A xxvii). However, there is also some significant variation between the usual AB forms and non-AB variants. Most importantly, <a> is common in words that in AB show <e> from the ‘second fronting’: so, *hadde*, *was* and *faire* are more frequent than *hedde*, *wes* and *feire*. Similarly, spellings in <a> occur beside <o> ones in words like *man*, *can*, although the latter spellings are dominant. Other variants suggest specifically a more southern dialect: for example, *hwanne* beside *hwenne* ‘when’, *3iue* beside *3eoue* ‘give’ and *suggen* beside *segge*.

Such non-AB variants occur in C2 mainly in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, and probably go back to a constrained translation from an exemplar in a different dialect. The rhyming usage suggests a southeastern provenance for *The Owl and the Nightingale*;⁴⁸ this is reinforced by relicts like *hi* ‘she’ that appear both in C1 and C2, as well as in J (see p 305). The text must at some stage have been translated into an AB-type usage; however, forms like *man*, *was* may be assumed to have been acceptable enough to the translator to be reproduced from time to time. Items 3, 5 and 6 follow the traditional AB orthography more consistently than *The Owl and the Nightingale*, including regular *mon* and *wes*; this may be assumed to reflect a less mixed dialectal background.

It can be concluded that C2 in the main contains a linguistic usage very similar to AB and R. The scattering of forms identical to the C1 ones may reflect the contribution

of the present scribe; in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, an earlier element of southeastern usage may also be discerned. While the text is of little value as direct evidence for a particular dialect, it is otherwise of great interest; most notably, it provides a very late example of the reproduction of an archaic language closely similar to AB.

The J text (MS Jesus 29)

In comparison with C, the usage of J gives an impression of relative consistency, which has possibly sometimes been overstated (see e.g. Atkins 1922: xxvii). The J text contains, in fact, a considerable amount of variation, some of which can be related to the changes of usage in C. A comparison between the most striking changes in C and the forms used in the equivalent stretches in J shows that certain patterns recur in both texts.

Figure 67 (p 292) illustrates such changes in both C and J within *The Owl and the Nightingale*. In the stretches corresponding to C1, both MSS show the forms *ac*, *þe3 þeyh*, *sulue*, *hi*, while those corresponding to C2 have *ah*, *þah*, *seolue*, *heo*. However, while the changes in Caligula involve orthographic detail, e.g. <o> against <eo> for OE *eo* and <w> against <hw> for initial *wh-*, the changes in Jesus are confined to a limited number of S-features. It seems that, while the Caligula scribe reproduces the text very nearly literatim, including purely orthographic features, the Jesus scribe produces a constrained selection based on a definable repertoire, with a fairly consistent spelling system.

The shifts of usage within J are not confined to the literary texts shared with C; similar shifts occur throughout the manuscript, and tend to involve the same limited group of items, most notably ‘but’, ‘though’, ‘self’ and ‘they’. As Figure 68 (p 293) shows, these forms tend to cluster together as alternating sets, even if many individual texts show a mixture of these (for simplicity, only texts of substantial length are included). One further item, ‘art’, seems to show similar fluctuation: the form *ert* appears as the main form in some texts, while *art* dominates in others. The item ‘self’, on the other hand, is not included in the table, as the forms *seolf* *seolue* predominate in

Item	C1	J1	C2	J2
SUCH	suich	such	swuch	such
BUT	ac	ac	ah	ah
IF	3if	if	3ef	if
THOUGH	þe3	þeyh	þah	þah
ERE	ar er	ar	ear ar	ar
SELF	sulue	sulue	seolue	seolue
SHE	ho	heo	heo	heo
THEY	hi	hi	heo	heo
ARE	boþ	beoþ	beoþ	beoþ
WH-	w-	hw-	hw-	hw-

Figure 67: Comparison between parts of C and J corresponding to C1 and C2

most texts; however, it may be noted that the rarer variants *sulf sulue* tend to occur only in the texts that also show the forms *ac*, *þeyh*, *hi* and *ert*, and that it is dominant in the J1 stretch of Item 2, *The Owl and The Nightingale* (see Figure 67). The manuscript thus seems to contain two fairly distinct sets of forms for this limited group of items.

The corresponding changes in MSS C and J, shown in Figure 67, must be assumed to derive from a shared ancestor containing two distinct scribal usages. It seems probable that the other changes in J also reflect differences in the scribe's exemplar(s). It might be asked whether J, like C, should not be treated as a composite text, with two or more dialectal strains that should be kept apart. Several reasons suggest, however, that both subsets should be considered part of the scribe's repertoire. Firstly, the changes involve only a small number of items, and the usage remains for the most part regular throughout the text. Secondly, although the usages in C seem to reflect geographically distinct linguistic subsets, both sets in J can, in the main,

Text	BUT	THOUGH	THEY	ART
1	ac	þeyh	hi	ert
2a	ac	þeyh	hi	ert art
2b	ah	þah	heo	art
3	ah	þah	heo	-
4	ah	þah	heo	-
5	ac ah	þah þeyh	heo	art
7, 8	ac	þauh	heo	art eart
10, 11	ac	-	hi	ert
12, 13	ah	þauh þah	heo	art
18	-	þeyh	hi heo	ert art
23	ac	þeyh	hi heo	-
27	ac	þeyh	heo hi	ert

Figure 68: Variation between literary texts in J

be accommodated in the repertoire of a single scribe. While the forms *ac*, *þeyh*, *hi* and *sulf* correspond to the C1 usage, localized in N Gloucestershire (see p 285-86), more restrictedly southern forms in C, like *sede* ‘said’, do not appear in J. The AB-type forms that correspond to the C2 usage of Caligula are more difficult to relate to the LME geographical distributions because of their archaic character. The forms *þah* ‘though’ and, probably, *ah* ‘but’, seem to be restricted to a somewhat more northern area than the former set. However, both forms seem to have been recessive during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; moreover, the scribe’s acceptance of them may reflect his familiarity with the AB-type conventions rather than his geographical background. Thirdly, a number of other items seem to show free variation between forms that might

be seen as typically northern and southern respectively in the SWML area; so e g *schulde* ~ *scholde* 'should'. These occur throughout the text with no obvious patterning, and suggest that the usage of the scribe may have accommodated both types.

Some items in J show large numbers of variants, mostly minor ones, that seem to reflect the dialectal background of the individual texts. The variation seems to be on a level similar to that in the Harley 2253 miscellany (see p 235-36), discussed by Samuels (1984 [1989]: 257):

...there is a certain range of forms that he accepts, and another, evidently much wider range, that he rejects. He belongs to the type of scribe whose tolerance of variants alters in degree from word to word. Each form has therefore to be considered separately, and its value as a dialect criterion judged according to the scribe's total practice.

The most striking example of the scribe's tolerance of minor variants is the item 'each' for which he uses eleven different forms, corresponding, it seems, to at least seven possible spoken variants: *vych(e)*, *vich*, *ech(e)*, *euch(e)*, *eoche*, *vch*, *hvych*, *huych*, *vlche*, *ewiche*, *euych*. Of these, *vych(e)* is clearly the scribe's main form; however, the *ech(e)* and *euch(e)* types occur in several parts of the text and may both be assumed to be acceptable to the scribe. All remaining forms appear in a single text, the *Poema Morale* (Item 3). Similarly, the item 'such' shows the following eight variants: *such(e)*, *swich*, *suych(e)*, *sucche*, *swuch*, *swyhc*, *svich*, *sweche*. Of these, *such(e)* is clearly the preferred form, while the distribution of *swich* suggests that it should also be included in the scribe's repertoire. The other forms are limited to particular texts, and may be considered relicts.

Many of the individual texts contain obvious relicts that stand out from the scribe's usual practice. The J1 stretch of Item 2 (*The Owl and the Nightingale*) contains a number of such forms, identical with or corresponding to those of the Caligula text: these include *suych* 'such' (C *suich*), *sulf* 'self', *ayss-* *aysch-* 'ask' and *ho* 'she'. The J2 stretch, on the other hand, contains a number of AB-type relicts, e g *hwuch* 'which', *ear* 'ere', *maht* 'might'. Spellings with <a> of words like *mon*, *con* occur only in Items 2 (*The Owl and the Nightingale*) and 23 (*The Proverbs of Alfred*). The most striking

relicts are found in Item 26, and include OE forms like *syndon syndan* ‘are’ and the genitive plurals *Mercena* ‘of Mercians’, *hida* ‘of hides’; these suggest a partial translation from an OE text, and should, naturally, be excluded from the scribal dialect.

The number of such relicts is, however, relatively small: for the great majority of items, a single, clearly dominant form is used. Accordingly, assessing what is likely to belong to the scribe’s own repertoire causes for the most part few problems. A localization of the scribal usage might, then, be attempted, based on comparison with the *LALME* material. As with the localizations carried out in chapter 4, the aim is not to replace or improve on the localizations suggested by Samuels (in *LALME*) and Laing (1993), but to ensure comparability by following the set guidelines and using a consistent set of items. The following forms, all of which occur regularly throughout the text, may be used for localization:

muchel ‘much’, *mony* ‘many’, *eny* ‘any’, *þurh þureh* ‘through’, *ayeyn* ‘again(st)’, *to-gadere* ‘together’, *þo þenne* ‘then’, *v-* for *f-*, *mon* ‘man’, *þonk* ‘thank’, *hedde* ‘had’, *wes* ‘was’, *fur* ‘fire’, *lutel* ‘little’, *sun(-* ‘sin’, *vuel* ‘evil’, *stude* ‘stead’, *beo* ‘be’, *heold* ‘held’, *þeo* ‘those’, *heo* ‘she’, *beop* ‘are’, *wile wile* ‘will’, *schold-* *schuld-* ‘should’

The forms *mony*, *eny* as well as the regular spelling of OE /y(:)/ with <u> suggest the western or southern parts of the country. In *LALME*, spellings with <eo> for OE *eo* are restricted to the SWML area, but may have been more widespread in the thirteenth century. However, the regular spelling with <o> of words like *mon* ‘man’ limits the localization to the WML area between S Lancashire and the Wye. A somewhat narrower distribution may be assumed for those spellings that seem to reflect the so-called second fronting, e.g. *hedde*, *wes*; although they occur over much of the West Midlands, they centre on the E Herefordshire - NW Worcestershire area. As these forms are used regularly in J, while being much less common in C, the present usage may be assumed to belong within the core area of <e> spellings.

The forms *þo* and *scholde*, as well as the spellings with *v-* for initial *f-*, exclude the areas north of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, while *ayeyn* and *schulde* exclude

the southern parts of the area. Within the remaining area, finally, the forms *to-gadere*, *vuel* and *stude* occur together only in texts localized in E Herefordshire, excluding the extreme north and south, as well as in a small part of SW Worcestershire and the NW extreme of Gloucestershire. To illustrate this, Figure 69 shows the distributions of *mon*, *wes*, *vuel* and *stude*.

It may next be considered whether those forms that show variation between the individual texts might be localized within this area. The *ac/ah* type for ‘but’ was not collected for the southern area in *LALME*. The other sets of forms seem to have largely complementary distributions. For example, *pah*, *heo* occur mainly in the northern part of the area and *pei(h)*, *hi* in the south; however, a boundary zone with mixed usage must be assumed. The *LALME* evidence suggests that most of these forms may be expected to co-occur in SE Herefordshire and the adjoining part of NW Gloucestershire. The recessive form *pah* ‘they’ is uncertain as evidence; it may, however, be noted that the *pau(g)h pau3* type that replaces it overlaps with the *pei(h) pei(3)* type in E Herefordshire (see maps 21, 22 in Appendix 4). Finally, the forms *heo* and *hi hy* ‘they’ show a relatively clear pattern, even if both are being replaced by the *pei pai* types in the *LALME* material (see p 342); the distributions are shown in Figure 70. The northern limit of *hi hy* forms a fairly definite boundary line, which may be taken to limit the localization of J to the north; scattered occurrences of *heo* in N Gloucestershire and NW Oxfordshire seem to indicate an earlier boundary zone of mixed usage.

Combining the evidence from Figures 69 and 70, it would seem that the most likely localization of the Jesus 29 text would be in E Herefordshire, roughly in the Ledbury-Much Marcle area, or in the immediately adjoining extreme of Gloucestershire (see Figure 71). This places the text slightly to the south of the *LALME* localization, while agreeing well with Margaret Laing’s suggestion of the possibility of NW Gloucestershire; however, as with most EME texts, the localization can only be very approximate.

It may be concluded that the scribe of the J text produces a constrained usage, with varying tolerance for different items, but on the whole consistent and localizable.

Figure 69

Approximate localization of
Jesus 29 (J; LP 7440)



Figure 70 Distribution of

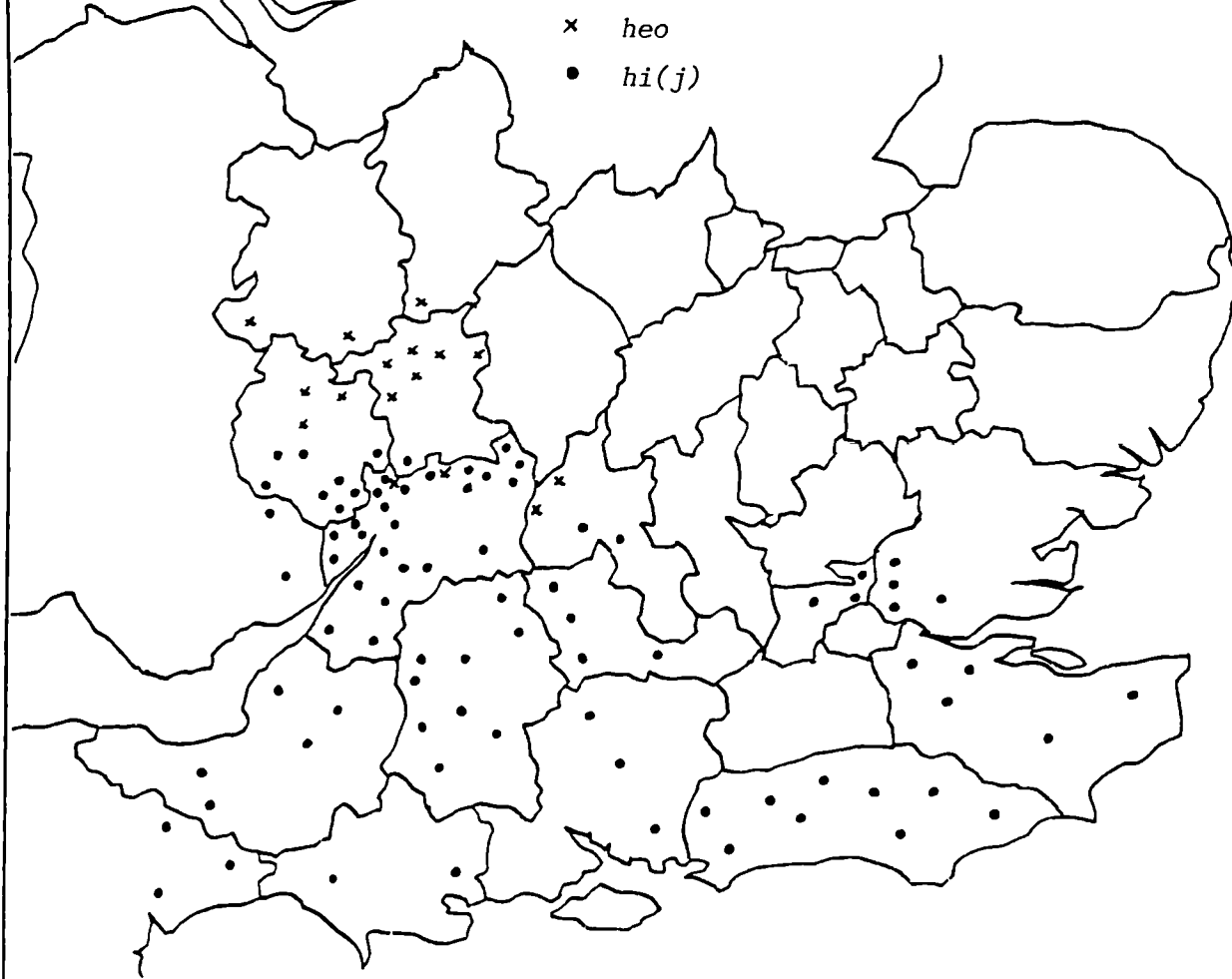
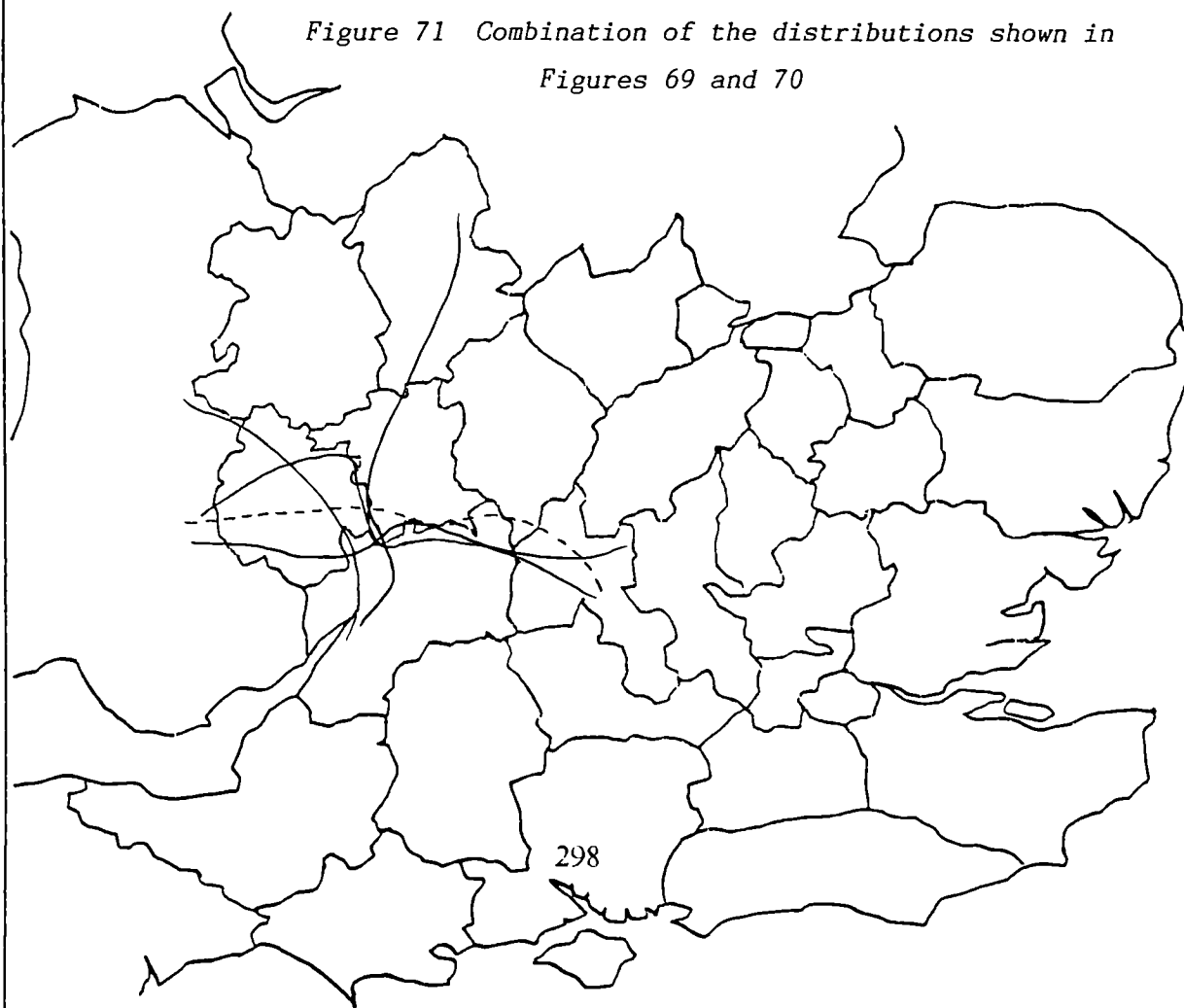


Figure 71 Combination of the distributions shown in
Figures 69 and 70



While the usage reflects some adherence to tradition, it may be considered to represent, in the main, the ‘new, dialectally-confident handling of the vernacular’ referred to by Smith (1991: 64-65). In the Herefordshire context, it is the earliest text that may be considered to provide fully reliable evidence for the dialect of a particular area, relatable to the *LALME* network.

5.2.6 The thirteenth-century development: tradition and innovation

The C and J scribes represent two very different approaches to copying. The former produces a *literatim* copy that, in part, retains a very archaic and conservative spelling system which must have been very far removed from the development of the spoken language; the latter translates his text into a fairly consistent, regionally distinctive language that, while retaining traditional features, may be assumed to represent his own usage in a way that the C scribe’s work does not. The contrast between these two roughly contemporary texts might be seen in relation to changes in text production that take place during the thirteenth century; the choices available in orthography and copying behaviour during this period are even more strikingly illustrated by comparison with the two other, related, miscellanies (see p 258).

These miscellanies, contained in MSS Trinity 323 (T) and Digby 86 (D), were used in the early *LALME* material and localized in W Worcestershire and NW Gloucestershire respectively. Like C and J, they are dated approximately to the last quarter of the thirteenth century⁴⁹. As may be expected from the localizations, the dialectal usages of all four manuscripts are closely related as regards regionally distinctive features that reflect the spoken mode (S-features): for example, all texts show <o> spellings in words like *man*, at least some traces of the ‘second fronting’, a rounded vowel for OE /y(:)/, and some fluctuation between the *heo* and *hi* type forms for ‘they’. However, the orthographic systems of the texts differ greatly. In Figure 72, five different systems contained in the manuscripts are compared: the two systems in C are

Feature	C2	J	C1	T	D
wynn	+	-	+	+	-
eth	+	-	-	+	-
OE <i>hw-</i>	hw-	hw-	w-	w-	w-
OE <i>cw-</i>	cw-	qu-	qu-	qu-	qu-
OE <i>a:</i>	a o	o	o	o	o
OE <i>æ:</i>	ea	e	e	e	e
OE <i>eo(ɣ)</i>	eo	eo	o	eo oe	e
OE <i>u:</i>	u	u	u	u ou	ou
OE <i>u</i>	u	u	u	o u	o u
OE <i>y:</i>	u	u	u	u ui	ui u
OE <i>-Vð</i>	-eð	-eþ	-eþ	-et	-eþ
OE <i>meaht</i>	miht	myht	mi3t	mist	mi3t
OE <i>magon</i>	mahen	mawen	mu3e	mowen	mowen
AB <i>godd</i>	godd	god	god	god	god

Figure 72. The occurrence of certain traditional features in the friars' miscellanies

listed separately, while the four scribes of T, whose usages differ comparatively little, are combined for the present purpose. The texts are placed roughly in a descending order of adherence to tradition.

The conservative character of the C2 usage stands out in comparison with all the other texts: this spelling system, nearly identical to that of the AB-language, is only slightly modified from the OE conventions. The next three systems, those of J, C1 and T, are much less conservative. None of them retains the digraph <cw>, nor the archaic AB vowel symbols shown in C2. Only J preserves the spelling <hw>, while T is alone in

retaining both *wynn* and *eth*. Apart from the loss of the latter symbols, the *J* usage is the most traditional of the three, showing in the main a modification and updating of conventional spellings rather than outright innovation.

The orthography of *T*, on the other hand, departs strikingly from the tradition of *AB*-related usage seen in *C2* and, in a modified form, in *J*. The innovative features involve in particular the fricative system: most notably, the scribes use <*t*> instead of <*p*> or <*ð*> in words like *beit beoit* ‘are’, and extend the use of <*s*> both for *sh* in words like *sal* ‘shall’ and for the medial fricative in *miste* ‘might’, *rist* ‘right’. Spellings like *suc* ‘such’, *huic* ‘each’ and *sculde* ‘should’ retain, on the other hand, the OE use of <*c*> rather than ME <*ch*>. Regular spelling of OE *hw*- with <*w*>, loss and unhistorical addition of initial *h*-, variation between the symbols *v*, *u*, *f* and *w*, as well as a large number of assimilated forms like *yemme* ‘give me’, *hammard* ‘homeward’, *mit tine sone* ‘with thy son’ suggest, as a whole, a close connection with the spoken mode.

Some of these spellings, in particular *-et* for *-eph*, have in other texts, especially documents, been assumed to reflect Anglo-Norman spelling habits, and one of the *T* scribes was considered by Skeat (1907: xiv ff) to be a Norman. However, it has been shown that the attribution of such spellings, in texts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to Norman scribes with imperfect command of English is unrealistic (see Clark 1992). In the case of *T*, furthermore, it is clear that the spellings cannot simply represent individual efforts. The manuscript is the work of at least four scribes who produce similar, although not identical, usages; as the forty-eight English items in the manuscript are beyond doubt copied from more than one source, this must reflect shared conventions. This is also suggested by the appearance of most of the distinctive features of *T* in other texts, including a few later ME ones (e.g. LP 7280 of the present material; see p 70). The orthography of *T* might, accordingly, be assumed to reflect an alternative set of early ME conventions, developed in a different direction both from the *AB*-type tradition and what appears to be the more southern orthography used in *C1*.

Finally, the usage of *D* stands out as the most progressive of all five; it shows none of the listed conservative features retained by the other texts, and its orthography is not essentially different from that of fourteenth-century texts.⁵⁰ It contains no such obvious peculiarities as *T* does; its spelling conventions are largely those that come to

dominate in the later material. The contrast between the two texts placed at the extremes, C2 and D, is striking, considering that they are roughly contemporary and belong to the same area. Interestingly, the different orthographies seem to parallel other, extralinguistic, factors.

Apart from containing a very archaic spelling system, C stands out from the other texts in several respects. The scribe's copying behaviour is virtually *literatim*, while all other scribes seem, as far as may be deduced, to produce a more or less translated text. The script of C also differs from the others: while the C scribe writes a 'professional' gothic hand, all the other scribes use much less formal scripts. Finally, the C scribe is the only one to use fairly heavy abbreviation, a practice that tends to be connected with Latin training; during the thirteenth century, abbreviation generally becomes lighter, as part of the process of making books more 'user-friendly' (see e.g. Dahood 1988).

The other three texts seem to show scribal translation into regionally distinctive and much less traditional spelling systems. As regards the particularly progressive D text, it may be noted that the literary contents to some extent parallel the differences in orthography: while both J and T contain some very early material, including texts of OE and transitional origin, D shares much of its material with the mid-fourteenth-century MS Harley 2253 (LP 9260). The large proportion of secular material in D might also be seen to reflect the development of a more literate culture; the present view that both D and MS Harley 2253 were compiled by and for laymen, rather than connected with the friars, would seem to reinforce this (see Miller 1963; Tschann and Parkes 1996).

Taken together, these comparisons suggest that the work of the C scribe probably reflects a Latin training, and represents a very conservative approach to the production and use of books compared with the other three manuscripts. In this respect, it might be linked with those texts considered by Smith (1991: 65) to 'look back to the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon past', e.g. the Caligula text of La3amon's *Brut*, bound together with C, and the Corpus text of *Ancrene Wisse* (A). The other three miscellanies each reflect a different departure from these traditions.

The developments shown in these texts, in particular D, foreshadow two features that become characteristic of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century material. Firstly, the conventional EME spelling systems, based on a few influential centres, are replaced with

a continuum of regionally significant spelling variation that seems to run parallel to the dialect continuum of the spoken mode. This feature of later ME spelling is, of course, what makes the material particularly suitable for dialect study. Secondly, the usage of D in particular seems to foreshadow the gradual LME development towards colourlessness, that is, the replacement of very strongly regional forms with ones that have a wider dialectal range.

Both these developments are directly connected with the growth of literacy and book production, a connection which needs no elaboration here (see e.g. Parkes 1979: xiii, xvi). It may, however, be noted that, in the Southwest-Midland materials, the continuity with older, OE-derived traditions does not entirely disappear until submerged by the spread of standardization. While progressive spelling systems like that of D are predominant from the fourteenth century on, traces of the older traditions survive into the fifteenth century (see e.g. pp 355, 371). Instead of a thoroughgoing revolution, the Southwest-Midland material shows a gradual thinning out of the tradition, with the most decisive stage in the late thirteenth century.

5.3 Old English and transitional materials

While comparison between the *LALME* evidence and the surviving EME materials is far from straightforward, there are interesting possibilities, some of which were discussed in the previous section. When the enquiry is stretched further back in time, comparison becomes harder still: the two major difficulties in the study of EME, the scarcity of the material and its conventional nature, constitute an even greater hindrance for the study of Old English dialects. The majority of surviving OE texts are written in a relatively consistent *Schriftsprache*, usually termed Late West Saxon (LWS). Texts containing other types of dialectal usage are few, and of such chronological spread that the compilation of a synchronic network of OE dialectal materials, comparable with the *LALME* and *LAEME* ones, scarcely seems feasible (see Hogg 1992: 5 ff; Crowley 1986: 101-104; Campbell 1959: 4 ff). There are, however, some indications that the study of charters and place-names might still improve knowledge about OE dialects.⁵¹

The traditional *a priori* division of Old English into four dialects, linked with early tribal kingdoms, is not particularly helpful with regard to comparison with later periods; attempts to define 'pure' dialects have, not surprisingly, tended to dismiss large amounts of material as 'mixed' (so e g Crowley 1986: 101 ff). The traditional division is particularly unfortunate as regards the large dialect area considered to represent 'Mercian', even though many scholars have treated the term as a cover for differing varieties (see Campbell 1959: 5 ff; Hogg 1992: 5 ff; Vleeskruyer 1953: 49). The 'West Mercian' dialect, held to correspond to the West-Midland dialects of the ME period, is traditionally defined in relation to one particular early text, the so-called Vespasian Psalter Gloss, itself the subject of some controversy (see p 305 f below). A number of other OE texts have been considered to contain 'Mercian' or an element of it; most of these seem, however, to contain a language clearly different both from the Vespasian Psalter Gloss and the EME West-Midland material (see Campbell 1959: 5-7, 362-363 and references there cited; Hogg 1992: 5-7; Vleeskruyer 1953: 51-61).

Apart from the Vespasian Psalter Gloss, texts considered to contain 'West Mercian' are few, and generally described as dialectally mixed. Two such texts,

surviving in twelfth-century manuscripts, seem to contain a dialect, or dialectal element, closely related to the present ME material; these are the short *Life of St Chad*, surviving in MS Oxford, Bodleian Hatton 116, and the collection of homilies in MS Bodley 343. Together with the Vespasian Psalter Gloss, these texts would seem to constitute the only OE or transitional literary material for which a close linguistic connection with the Southwest Midland ME material has been shown; a brief discussion of each of them will, accordingly, be of interest.

The Vespasian Psalter Gloss

The Vespasian Psalter Gloss (henceforth VP) survives in MS Cotton Vespasian A i, a manuscript connected with Canterbury, and has been assigned to the ninth century (see Ball 1970: 462-463). It contains a remarkably regular linguistic usage that appears to be closely related to the EME materials discussed in 5.2, in particular the AB-language. The connection between VP and AB has, to some extent, been played down by Ball (1970: 465), who argues that 'although they are certainly closely related, "AB language" cannot be the direct descendant of the language of the gloss'. Of the differences noted by Ball, some would appear to be of fundamental importance only if a very rigid view is taken of dialectal homogeneity: for example, slightly different distributions of the characteristically western unrounding *o* > *a* hardly justify a dialectal distinction in themselves. However, the different forms of the nominative/accusative feminine singular and plural pronoun used in the two texts (VP *hie*; AB *ha*, *heo*) are undoubtedly problematic. In OE and ME materials in general, the *hie* type appears for the feminine singular only in the Southeast, particularly Kent (*LALME* IV: 7); while this does not disprove the possibility that *hie* might have appeared as a form of 'she' in ninth-century West Mercian, the form should probably be treated with some suspicion, especially in view of the Kentish connection of the manuscript.

The Kentish connection has caused some controversy, and a number of earlier scholars considered the dialect Kentish; however, its West Mercian character has long remained practically uncontested (see Ball 1970: 462). It has been suggested that the

general regularity of the usage must reflect the work of a Mercian scribe in Canterbury, copying from a Mercian exemplar; this view, advanced by Campbell (1967: 88) is based on the assumption that competent *literatim* copying between dialects would have been unlikely. On the other hand, Ball (1970) argues that the text is more likely to have been copied by a Kentish scribe, aiming at producing a *literatim* copy from a West Mercian exemplar. The latter view explains a number of otherwise inconsistent forms in the text, and is probably to be preferred.

The implication is that the linguistic evidence of the VP gloss should be treated with some caution: it may not in all details represent reliable evidence for 'West Mercian', and it may quite possibly reflect some degree of constrained selection. At the same time, there is little doubt that the VP gloss, or at least a major element in it, is dialectally closer related to the ME Herefordshire material than any other OE text dated before the twelfth century.

It might be asked whether it would be feasible to attempt a localization of this element using extrapolation from the ME material. The usage undoubtedly shows a large number of features that connect it with the West Midland area and, specifically, with the AB-language; these include in particular the regular occurrence of forms showing 'second fronting' (see p 366 ff) and the *o* > *a* change in words like *margen/marhen* 'morning' (see Hogg 1992: 95). However, linguistic changes between the ninth and thirteenth centuries render the comparable material very limited, and shifts in the distribution of forms are likely to have taken place.

Localizations based on other types of evidence, particularly onomastic, have been attempted: a Lichfield origin has been argued by Kuhn (1948), while Kitson (1990: 219) suggests a more southern placing in Staffordshire on the basis of charter bound evidence. From the point of view of the present material, it seems reasonably safe to assume that the VP usage should be placed in the central West Midland area, including the southern parts of Shropshire and Staffordshire and the extreme north of Herefordshire and Worcestershire; while a western placing would agree best with the ME evidence, this may simply reflect a general westward shift of distributions.

The Life of St Chad

The *Life of St Chad* survives in a manuscript of the early twelfth century, MS Bodleian Hatton 116, which otherwise mainly contains homilies by Ælfric. The manuscript was in Worcester by the early thirteenth century, and was annotated by the so-called Tremulous Hand (see Laing 1993: 135 and references there cited). Laing (1993: 135) states that the language of the *Life of St Chad* 'is not late W-S but a late OE more reminiscent of the language of the Katherine group'. Vleeskruyer (1953) considers the usage to be mixed, with late OE usage overlaying an original layer of a postulated early Mercian literary language; however, it would seem that the latter theory leads him to polarize the data into archaic and transitional layers that do not appear fully necessary in order to account for the variation.

The main problem with *Chad* is its brevity, which means that the data is insufficient for significant patterns to emerge from the variation. However, it may be noted that the variation mainly tends to involve features for which, in ME, the distribution boundaries transverse the SWML area: so *ah* ~ *ac* 'but', *man* ~ *mon* 'man', *hefde* ~ *hæfde* 'had' and *heo* ~ *hi* 'they'. Other items that occur in reasonably large numbers show a regular usage: so *micl*- 'much', *fram* 'from', *ciric*- 'church', *hwet* 'what', *wes* 'was', *woruld* 'world', *heora* 'their' and *secgan* 'say'. Judging from the ME evidence, these forms would be agree best with the southern part of the core SWML area, that is, SE Herefordshire, N Gloucestershire and SW Worcestershire, and might conceivably all belong within one scribe's repertoire. A corresponding variation in the items 'but', 'man', 'had' and 'they' appears in the MS Jesus 29, localized in SE Herefordshire (see pp 291 ff, 296), with which the usage of *Chad* would, on the whole, appear to have some affinity. However, because of its brevity, *Chad* is of limited value as dialect evidence.

The text contained in MS Bodley 343 is a very late example of copied Old English: it is dated to the second half of the twelfth century, and contains a large collection of pre-conquest texts. The manuscript contains some eighty pieces, mainly homilies, in English, including works by Ælfric and Wulfstan. Unlike the only slightly later Lambeth 487 collection (see p 275), it contains no post-conquest compositions, and the language is recognizably Old rather than Middle English. A selection of texts from the manuscript have recently been edited by Irvine (1993).

According to Irvine, the language follows in its main characteristics the LWS literary language, with two main modifications: firstly, it shows some orthographic changes typical of the transition to ME, and, secondly, it contains features that suggest an element of a West Midland dialect, presumably the scribe's own. The latter element seems to be related to the types of language represented by AB and the Vespasian Psalter gloss; however, as Irvine (1993: lvi) notes, the usage is not consistent throughout the manuscript, and may contain several dialectal elements:

... occasional significant linguistic variations between homilies suggest that not all deviations from late West-Saxon are the scribe's own. A thorough study of the language in the whole of Bodley 343... is required to establish which linguistic traits can, and which cannot, be ascribed to the Bodley scribe.

Accordingly, the material should be treated with some caution until a thorough analysis has been carried out. Irvine notes, however, a large number of variants that suggest a usage closely related both to VP and AB; such forms include *mucl* 'much', *ah* 'but', *seolf* 'self', *eornende* 'running', *beorht* 'bright', *mare3en* 'morning', *wul-* 'will', *walde* 'would'. Interestingly, while such 'non-West-Saxon' spellings generally occur as minor variants only, the rounding of OE *a* before a nasal (e.g. *monn*) is frequent at least in certain words. Irvine's description of the language also seems to suggest that the non-West Saxon character is particularly evident on the level of morphology (e.g. regular *heo*

‘they’ and few syncopated pres sg verb forms, see Irvine 1993: lxxiv and lxxvii). The text shows an interesting ‘graphemic confusion’ of the symbols <e> and <æ>, with occasional further interchange with <ea> and <a>; some connection might be assumed with the most controversial part of the AB orthography, the use of <e> and <ea>, and it will be suggested below that the ‘confusion’ here reflects a hypercorrecting tendency (see p 367 f).

On the basis of textual and other connections, Irvine (1993: lii) suggests that the manuscript was ‘probably written somewhere near Worcester, though not at Worcester itself’, adding that this ‘would... tally with the scribe’s linguistic traits’. While the overall veneer of LWS orthography makes localization of the scribal dialect difficult, there is little doubt that it is most closely related to the AB-usage and, in general, the ME material localized in the northern part of the SWML area, that is, N and E Herefordshire, N Worcestershire and S Shropshire.

Summary

Of the three texts discussed in this section, none is unconditionally suitable for comparison with the later material: there is some uncertainty about the dialectal structure of the *Vespasian Psalter Gloss*, and its early date limits the possibilities for comparison; the *Chad* text is too short to provide reliable material, and Bodley 343 contains a dominant layer of more or less standardized LWS usage. On the other hand, each text clearly does contain an element of usage closely related to the later SWML material. The usage of *Chad* is probably to be placed somewhere in the SW Herefordshire - SE Worcestershire - NW Gloucestershire area, while the two other texts would seem to reflect a more northern variety, related to the AB-language; in the case of the *Vespasian Psalter Gloss*, the early date and uncertain status preclude even a tentative placing.

Despite these problems, the evidence of the texts is too valuable to be ignored, and they will be used for comparison in the interpretative studies in Part III. However, their respective limitations should be borne in mind, and their status as an ‘earlier stage’ of the LME Herefordshire usage should not be taken for granted.

5.4 Comparison with Early Modern and Present-Day English evidence

An interpretative study of the ME dialect of a geographical area cannot afford to ignore the evidence of the present-day dialect, especially if this, like the dialect of Herefordshire, has remained a predominantly rural and conservative one. However, comparison of the ME evidence with that of later periods involves considerable problems. As pointed out in *LALME* (I: 27), 'the choice of an ideal set of differentiating variables differs from region to region and from age to age'; modern dialect surveys do not necessarily agree, with each other or with *LALME*, in their selection of collected items. Over the long timespan, language change has also reduced the overall number of comparable features. Moreover, even in the case of otherwise comparable data, the nature of the evidence constitutes a methodological problem: while the medieval evidence is confined to written language, the present-day data are derived directly from spoken usage, while most of the evidence for the preceding period is of an indirect kind, reported or inferred.

This has two major implications for diachronic dialect study. Firstly, comparison between the different periods requires extrapolation from written or indirect evidence in order to trace developments in the spoken mode; the comparison will thus be indirect, and involves some fundamental theoretical problems, in particular as regards the relationship between orthography and phonology. No solution to these problems can be offered here, and the possible significance of correspondences must generally be left open. Secondly, the context of the evidence is of even more crucial importance than when dealing with written sources only.

The sources

For a comparison between the ME and PDE evidence, the linguistic development during the intervening centuries is of considerable interest. The sources for this period are much less copious, and of a very different nature from the ME evidence. From the late fifteenth century onwards, a standardized usage spread into virtually all English writing,

and surviving texts give little information about dialectal differences. Between the late fifteenth and late nineteenth centuries, evidence for dialect usage has, accordingly, to be derived from a variety of more or less indirect sources. These include: comments on contemporary usage, mainly by orthoepists, grammarians and lexicographers; glossaries of 'provincial words'; dialect imitations in literary works, and occasional spellings that seem to indicate regional pronunciation. These sources are discussed in Wakelin (1982) and Ihalainen (1994), both of which provide important overviews of the post-medieval development.

While studies of English dialects appear from the sixteenth century onwards (see Ihalainen 1994), the first detailed and systematic survey was carried out by Ellis in 1889. In the present century, the *Survey of English Dialects* has provided a large body of evidence, which continues to form the basis of much recent dialect study. The *SED* material was collected in the 1950s, and may be assumed to reflect the situation in the early part of the century. While it is generally invaluable for the purpose of comparison, one major drawback should be noted. The emphasis of *SED* lies in providing a wide range of material, and its coverage is not very dense; Herefordshire, for example, is covered by only seven informants. Accordingly, the material is not well suited for tracing patterns over a limited area.

Apart from these major surveys, valuable information about the late nineteenth-century situation is provided by Wright (1898-1905, 1905). A large number of smaller-scale studies of varying scope and approach have been carried out for most parts of the country; the dialect of Herefordshire is, however, one of the least studied and documented. A recent bibliography of dialect resources (Edwards 1993: 300) lists only four publications, two of which relate specifically to Herefordshire; this may be compared with over eight pages of references for Lancashire. The two publications relating to the Herefordshire dialect consist of slim booklets, *Herefordshire speech* by Leeds (1985) and *Dialect and local usages of Herefordshire* by Haggard (1972). Both are non-specialist works, and present most of the material as glossaries of local words and expressions; Leeds also gives an account of the grammar and phonology, which, although in many respects open to criticism, is of considerable interest.

A primary source for the Herefordshire dialect in the EModE period may be noted, although its evidential value is uncertain. This consists of the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, written from Brampton Bryan Castle during the period 1625-43. Of these, Burnley (1992: 255-256) notes that 'the language is fairly standardised, showing few dialectal peculiarities, but the spelling system is rather inconsistent and idiosyncratic, confusing standard forms with the writer's own phonetic spellings.'

The status of Lady Brilliana as a Herefordshire dialect speaker is uncertain, as little is known about her whereabouts before her marriage to Sir Robert Harley in 1623 (see Lewis 1854: xiii). However, the orthography of the letters bears certain similarities to LP 7481, localized in the western marcher area south of Brampton Bryan; moreover, several of the forms used by Lady Brilliana appear to correspond to modern Herefordshire usage, and Leeds (1985), who was familiar with the present-day dialect, considered the letters good evidence.

Some Modern English dialect criteria

In the Modern English period, the dialects of the SW and SWML areas remain distinctive and, on the whole, very conservative. Some of the features traditionally defined as criteria for the ME dialects of these areas, e.g. the front rounded vowels, disappear towards the end of the ME period, while others are retained to the present century. A number of features typical of southern ME become in ModE restricted to southwestern varieties; at the same time, new developments appear in the post-medieval evidence. The following list, following Wakelin (1982: *passim*) and Ihalainen (1994: 214), attempts to bring together some of the most distinctive grammatical and phonological features of the SWML dialects up to the late nineteenth century.

- 1) *Ich* 'I': *Ich say* 'I say'
- 2) proclitic *ch-* 'I': *cham* 'I'm', *chall* 'I'll'
- 3) universal *-th*: *he go 'th*, *folks go 'th*
- 4) universal *-s*: *they makes them*, *farmers makes them*

- 5) plural *am*: *they'm nice* 'they're nice'
- 6) uninflected *be*: *I be, he be, they be* (but *thee bist*)
- 7) uninflected *do, have*: *he don't know, it have happened*
- 8) periphrastic *do*: *they da peel them*
- 9) pronoun exchange: *us 'll do it, it leasures we*
- 10) 2 person sg verb: *thee dost know/thee 's know* 'you know'
- 11) rounding of *a* before nasals: *mon* (WML only), *hond*
- 12) retention of ME *ai*: *day* [dai]
- 13) voicing of initial fricatives: *vinger, zider, zhilling*
- 14) retention of final and preconsonantal *r*
- 15) *r* for *gh*: *fort* 'fought', *borten* 'boughten'

By the late nineteenth century, types 1, 2 and 3 had become obsolete, and the latter was replaced by 4. These features were retained longest in the Devon-Somerset area, and may have disappeared much earlier in the SWML area. Also by the late nineteenth century, the rounding in *hond etc* (11) disappeared in the South, being now retained only in the WML *mon* area (see below). The other features seem, to a greater or lesser extent, to be retained in the present-day usage of all or part of Herefordshire.

The list suggests both a continuity of trends already discernable in ME, and a general conservatism and stability. The former involves specifically features 3-8, which seem to continue a gradual loss of distinctions in the present-tense verb system, already begun in the late OE period (see p 344). The conservatism is shown especially by features 10-13; of these, 11 and 13 show the retention of features already regionally distinctive in ME.

The *mon man* pattern seems to show a remarkable stability. According to Wakelin (1982: 6), '[t]here is virtually no early evidence for the persistence of this feature after the middle ages except for its striking presence on the modern map'. The *SED Atlas* (Orton *et al* 1978: map Ph5) shows a West-Midland distribution of /ɒ/ in 'man' that is almost identical to the ME distribution of *mon*, as mapped out by Moore, Meech and Whitehall (1935) and Kristensson (1987: 237); for the most part, it also agrees with the distribution in *LALME* (I: 328, map 95). The southern limits differ,

however, considerably between the maps, and it seems that Herefordshire, throughout the medieval and modern periods, may have formed a boundary zone for this feature, with varying usage (see p 365).

The voicing of initial fricatives, of which only *v-* for *f-* is generally shown in ME orthography, seems to have stretched as far north as S Shropshire and S Staffordshire in the ME period; however, it occurs much less frequently in the *LALME* Herefordshire material than in more southern counties like Gloucestershire, and may be assumed to have been marginal, at least in the northern part. Wakelin (1982: 9) suggests that the feature was still being diffused over S England in the sixteenth century, when it is ‘frequently used by early playwrights and other writers to characterise rustic speakers’. It seems to have begun to recede during the seventeenth century, and is now confined to the southwest (Wakelin 1982: 11). In Herefordshire, the feature seems to survive at least in part: in the *SED* maps it is attested only for the southeastern part, and Ellis (1889: 68, 176) considers it regular only in this area. Leeds (1985: 17), who herself lived in Ross-on-Wye, considered the *v-* type (*vork*, *vorty*) confined to older speakers, but made no such comment of the *z*-type (*zeed*, *zummat*).

Features 14 and 15 reflect one of the most distinctive features of PDE Herefordshire speech, the retention of prevocalic and final /r/, with retroflex realization and a strong tendency to hyper-rhoticity and metathesis. The *SED Atlas* (Orton *et al* 1978, Ph205-207) shows that the county (except the far west) forms the central part of an area of hyper-rhoticity in ‘meadow’, ‘yellow’ and ‘window’; it is also shown in forms like *charerty* ‘charity’ and even *mer* ‘me’, *ther* ‘thee’ recorded by Leeds (1985: 15), and is very prominent in the present-day speech of E Herefordshire (Fownhope; personal observation). This feature, which might be of some antiquity (cf spellings like *erder* ‘adder’ in LP 7401, *fork* ‘folk’ in LP 7420, and *famerly* ‘family’ in the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley), is of some interest for the development of the third-person pronoun system, which will be discussed in Part III (see especially pp 338-39).

Dialectal variation within Herefordshire

Varying dialectal usage within Herefordshire is difficult to assess from the available modern evidence: the scarcity of informants in the *SED* survey restricts its reliability for small-scale patterns, and Leeds does not comment systematically on local differences. Ellis (1889; see map in Ihalainen 1994: 236) drew a major dialect boundary through the county, including the SE part in his mid-southern ('Wessex') variety, the largest part of the county forming the southern half of a 'western division'. Ellis considers the usage of the latter an 'imperfect' dialect, strongly influenced by Welsh, and finds many of the typically southwestern features, e.g. types 12, 13 (see p. 313) and the retroflex realization of /r/, 'uncertain' or varying in this area.

The most obvious example of Welsh influence, and, together with the rhotacism, the most striking feature of the present-day speech, is the 'Welsh intonation' noted by Ellis, also recorded by the *SED*, and described by Leeds (1985: 13) as follows: 'Sentences end in a rising intonation - a slight lilt in the south of the county, but increasing nearer the Welsh border. In moments of emotion or in expressing surprise or vigorous agreement, this... may even lead to a shift of stress'. Welsh influence in phonology and grammar seems generally to be considered strong in the border areas, but has been little studied (see Ellis 1882, esp. 185-188). Leeds (1985: 17) notes the adoption of initial *gw-* in loanwords like *gwethel*, *gwerit*, to which she relates the local pronunciation *gwine* 'going'.

While isoglosses drawn across a continuum are always abstractions, it is likely that Ellis' east-west division, based on his uncertain evidence for retroflex /r/, is particularly artificial. The general inference to be drawn from the evidence is that of a continuum between the eastern usage, more strongly characterized by typically SW features, and a more strongly Welsh-influenced usage to the west. On the other hand, the verbal forms recorded by Leeds for the extreme north of the county seem to reflect a more clear-cut division in terms of the dialect criteria listed by Ihalainen (1994: 214, 217ff): these agree with the forms typical of the Northwest Midland counties in the *SED* material, including negative plural forms of the type *canna* 'can't', *wunna* 'won't' and the past tense form *warnt* 'wasn't'.

By way of a summary, two points may be noted. Firstly, the main patterns of diatopic variation in the present-day dialect may be described in terms of two continua: one from the west to the east, in terms of the presence of Welsh influence, and another from the north to the south, with the focus shifting from traditionally West-Midland to South-Western characteristics. The area would seem to form a boundary zone for a number of distinctive features, including [ɒ] in *mon* and the voicing of initial fricatives. The distributions of these features seem to have remained remarkably stable since the ME period; a similar stability appears to characterize the more general patterns, like the distinctive usage of the far north of the county, and may be attributed to the relative isolation of the area (see pp 377, 383).

PART III

6 STUDIES IN THE DIALECT OF MEDIEVAL HEREFORDSHIRE

6.1 The selection of features for study

In accordance with the principle that 'every text has its own history', the material has so far been analysed mainly from the point of view of its scribal and textual context. The aim has been to assess the nature of the evidence contained in each individual text, a task which, it was argued in the Introduction, is necessary before linguistic conclusions can be drawn from the data. The final part of the study attempts to approach the latter task. No aim at comprehensiveness is possible within the scope of the present work; while a large part of the collected data is presented in the Appendices, in the form of linguistic profiles, item lists and maps, a discussion of the linguistic developments must of necessity be limited to a few selected aspects of the language. The principles on which the selection has been made are three. Firstly, the features should, together, give a reasonably broad picture of the dialect, including different levels of language, while illustrating its unity as a system. Secondly, they should be chosen to illustrate dialectal variation, and in particular those dialect features most typical of, and central to, the linguistic usage of Herefordshire and the Southwest Midlands. Finally, whether exclusive to this area or not, they should have some relevance to the development of the language as a whole, or illustrate in a more general way processes of language change. A reasonable starting-point might, then, be to take as a basis for selection the main levels of language covered by the questionnaire, that is, morphology and phonology / orthography, and to define, within each system, a feature or development of particular interest, answering to the two latter requirements.

The most striking grammatical development between OE and PDE is the gradual loss of inflexion, which, together with other changes, constitutes a major development

from a comparatively synthetic language to a comparatively analytic one. This involves a wide-ranging reorganization of grammatical systems, including total or partial loss of such syntagmatic tracking devices as gender and case, the function of which is gradually taken over by an increasingly rigid element order and a growing use of prepositions. These changes affect the entire system; however, the changes within the noun phrase are particularly relevant to the ME period.

Within the noun phrase, the changes lead to the evolution of a variety of new patterns, including the emergence of new oppositions to express ‘marginal grammatical categories’ (Samuels 1972: 155). A good example is the ME development of the OE determiners, where a complete loss of the OE structures is followed by the emergence of a new pattern, based on a different set of oppositions. The most striking dialectal divergences are, however, found in the development of the system of personal pronouns, both in terms of grammatical structure and formal variety. Of particular interest are the developments that concern gender and number distinction in the third person, an area which cannot be properly discussed without some reference to the verbal system, in particular the present indicative. A suitable approach for the present purpose might, then, be to consider the post-OE development of the systems of gender, case and number with reference to three subsystems in particular: the determiners, the third-person pronoun system, and the present indicative verbs. These will be discussed in 6.2 below.

The phonological features traditionally used as dialect criteria for the Southwest Midland area involve two tendencies in particular: the rounding (and unrounding) of vowels, and the voicing (and unvoicing) of consonants. From the point of view of the present material, the most copious and conveniently gathered data appear for the two main features of the rounding of vowels, the retention of EME front rounded vowels and the West-Midland rounding/retraction of Germanic *a* before nasal; as another dialectal feature involving Germanic *a*, the effect of the so-called ‘second fronting’, is particularly evident in the Herefordshire material, the present discussion might most profitably focus on these developments in the system of stressed vowels. The front rounded vowels will be considered in 6.3.1 below, while the two distinctive developments of Germanic *a* will be discussed in 6.3.2 and 6.3.3 respectively.

6.2 Gender, case and number: changing patterns

6.2.1 The loss of gender and case

Of the three systems relevant for OE inflexion within the noun phrase, that of grammatical gender seems to have ceased to operate, in some dialects, already in the late OE period. As Jones (1988: preface) puts it, standard handbooks tend to give the impression ‘that grammatical gender was catastrophically and suddenly “lost” from the language’s rule system sometime “around” the eleventh century’; however, Jones suggests that there was a ‘a considerable temporal span (some three hundred years) during which there existed “echoes” of the gender classification of nouns’. The Herefordshire evidence suggests a somewhat different picture: while the OE system survived considerably longer than in many other parts of the country, the loss, once it took place, seems to have been relatively rapid and absolute. Possible reasons for this suddenness are suggested in 6.2.3 (see pp 330-31).

The breakdown of the OE case system is closely linked with that of grammatical gender, and, once the latter is lost, the remaining traces of ‘case’ can no longer be described in terms of the OE system. Apart from those categories still formally distinctive in PDE, a possessive case (in nouns and pronouns) and an object case (in pronouns only), a ‘prepositional’ case seems to have lingered on for a short time, characterized mainly by prevocalic final -n (in determiners) and final -e (in adjectives and nouns); these forms, available only in part of the paradigm, either disappeared at an early stage in ME or developed functions other than grammatical.⁵²

While some ‘case’ distinctions remain in the noun and pronoun systems, both gender and case are entirely lost from the determiner and adjective systems during the ME period. Furthermore, the breakdown of inflexions leads to a disappearance of the distinction of number in large parts of the system, including most determiners and adjectives, as well as parts of the verb system. While these developments vary greatly between dialects, the general tendency seems to be to compensate for the losses by reinforcing the distinction of number in the ‘headword’ categories within the noun

phrase, that is, the noun and pronoun. In nouns, the distinctive plural ending *-s* becomes fully generalized during the ME period, while the pronoun system retains a strongly marked distinction by the borrowing of a new set of plural forms, the *they / their / them* types, from Scandinavian.

The Southwest Midland development is of particular interest for a number of reasons; most notably, the breakdown of the OE system takes place relatively late, and the subsequent developments, especially of the pronoun system, differ from those in other parts of the country. There also seem to be some interesting dialectal differences within the area.

6.2.2 The Old English systems

The OE inflexional system had already undergone considerable simplification compared with earlier stages of Germanic and Indo-European, both in terms of the number of categories and the extent of differentiation within these (see Millward 1989: 58-60; Smith 1996: 145). There remain three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter), four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive and dative) and two numbers (singular and plural), as well as vestiges of an instrumental case and of dual number; however, even within this system there is a large overlap of forms. In most word classes, gender is no longer distinguished in the plural; formal distinction has disappeared between the nominative and accusative cases in the neuter singular, and in all genders in the plural; the genitive and dative cases in the feminine singular paradigm have also fallen together. In addition, there has been considerable levelling of forms between many declensions, particularly within the 'weak' noun and adjective systems (see Millward 1989: 82-84).

The reduction of the inflexional system during the pre-OE stages is part of a general long-term trend towards morphological simplification; this tendency, common in Germanic languages and linked with a weakening of final syllables, has been attributed to a shift in stress-patterns in late proto-Indo-European (see Smith 1996: 154 and references there cited). In the late OE and early ME periods, various phonological

changes reflect this general development, and are directly relevant for the breakdown of the inflexional system. Of particular importance is the late OE merger of unstressed vowels, the final stage of which is assumed to have taken place in the south in the eleventh century (Campbell 1959: 157; Jordan 1968: 125); a further levelling development is the gradual loss of final -n, which is evident in the North in the earliest OE texts but does not affect southern dialects until the EME period, even then being restricted to certain syntactic and phonetic environments (Jordan 1968: 152).

While this trend towards morphological simplification is shared by the Germanic languages, it may be noted that some of them, notably Modern German, remain comparatively highly inflected, and the vulnerability of the OE system to change can probably be overstated. The accelerated rate of the breakdown of the inflexional system during the late OE and early ME periods has usually been connected with extralinguistic factors, in particular language contact. The fact that the development was most rapid in the north suggests that Scandinavian settlement might have been a decisive factor in implementing the changes, and some have gone as far as seeing here a process of creolization (Poussa 1982; but cf Görlach 1986 [1990]). The loss of inflexions takes place at markedly different times and rates in different dialects, and does not necessarily follow the same patterns everywhere; on the whole, the OE system seems to have survived longest in the SW and SE areas. In the present material, the pattern of loss is seen particularly clearly in the determiner system, which will be discussed below.

6.2.3 The determiner system (1): gender and case

The two major systems of determiners in OE, the 'the/that' and 'this' types, show the maximal OE differentiation of case and, in singular, of gender. The paradigm of 'the/that' is shown in Figure 73, with the forms listed in Late West Saxon; where different, the forms of the Vespasian Psalter Gloss, the major OE text considered to represent 'West Mercian' (see p 304), are provided in italics (for a detailed account of the forms, see Campbell 1959: 290-291).

	Masc	Fem	Neut	Pl
Nom	se	seo <i>sie</i>	þæt <i>ðet</i>	þa
Acc	þone	þa	þæt <i>ðet</i>	þa
Gen	þæs <i>ðes</i>	þare þære <i>ðere</i>	þæs <i>ðes</i>	þara þæra <i>ðeara</i>
Dat	þæm þam	þare þære <i>ðere</i>	þæm þam	þæm þam
Inst	þon þy		þon þy	

Figure 73: The 'the that' determiner system in LWS and in the Vespasian Psalter Gloss

	Masc	Fem	Neut	Pl
Nom	þe	þa þeo	þet	þa þeo
Acc	þene	þa þe	þet	þa þeo
Gen	þes	þere	þes	þere
Dat	þan þen þon þa þe	þere þer	þan þe	þan þa þe

Figure 74: The 'the that' determiner system in Lambeth 487

In the transition to Middle English, certain formal changes affect the paradigm in all dialects. The masculine and feminine nominative singular forms appear as *þe* and *þeo*, with a generalization of initial *þ*-. Late and post-OE sound changes affect a number of forms: the merger of unstressed vowels leads to a loss of distinction between the genitive/dative forms in the feminine singular and the genitive plural forms; the final -m in dative endings is, further, weakened to -n, and eventually lost before consonants (see Jordan 1968: 128). These changes are already seen in the transitional MS Bodley 343, and are fully carried out in the earliest Middle English text in the Herefordshire material, MS Lambeth 487, dated to *ca* 1200 (see Figure 74).⁵³ A further loss of distinction in the latter has taken place between the nominative and accusative forms in the feminine singular: the asymmetrical pattern of the OE feminine and plural forms seems to have undergone levelling in both directions, so that the forms *þeo* and *þa* have become functionally equivalent. Together with the merger of unstressed vowels, this leads to an almost complete loss of formal distinction between the feminine and plural paradigms, which remain differentiated only in the prepositional/dative case. The immediate effect on the functional efficiency of the system would be limited; however, it is a step towards an overall reduction of forms, and leaves the feminine dative singular form an apparent exception in two patterns: in relation to the other dative forms and to the otherwise identical plural paradigm. All other dative forms show occasional loss of the final nasal before a following consonant; while a few examples of this development are already seen in MS Bodley 343, they are much more common in Lambeth 487, and, as might be expected, more frequent in the B group homilies than in the largely OE-derived A-group.

Compared with Lambeth 487, MS Jesus 29, dated to the end of the thirteenth century, shows a remarkably conservative system, which is worth a closer study. While this should ideally be based on the entire material, for the present purpose a single text, *The Passion of Our Lord*, has been selected; a comparison with four shorter texts (Items 4, 12, 13 and 18; see p 281) and with the glossary in Morris (1872) suggests no significant differences in usage between different parts of the manuscript. The material from the *Passion* is listed below, grouped according to OE gender and syntactic function; for sparsely recorded items, additional examples from other parts of the manuscript are given, marked thus: [þe saule.

Masculine

Subject: þe holy gost, þe veond, þe seopheorde, þe dureward, þe kyng salomon, þe byscop *etc.*

Object: þene calch, þene dureward, þene enne, þene king, þene red, þane veond, þene þridde day X 2, þene oþer day; þen heoueliche kyng, [þan appel; *pronoun* þene þat

Possessive: þes prophetes body, in þes gywes hond

After prepositions: group 1) at þe schere þursday, at þe fote, at þe heuede, for þe quede, in þe stude, yne þe stude, in þe leyhtune, in þe wolde, of þe kynge, of þe holy goste, of þe deþ, of þe tune, to þe deþe, to þe grunde; *group 2)* at þen ende, of þen engel, at þon heye vndarne, myd þon oþre, myd þon heuene kynge, to þen heuene kynge, in þen ilke stude, toward þan ilke stude, of þen one þeoue; *group 3)* þureh þene vend, þureh þene quede, fort þene þridde day, vpe þene ston

In apposition to prepositional phrase: of sathanas þen olde, to pilatus þen maystre; myd ihu þene valse profete

Feminine

Subject: þe tyde, [þe saule *but* [þeo luue

Object: þe rode, [þe lauedi, [þe saule

After prepositions: group 1) at þe glede, vppe þe rode, of þe rode, wiþ-vte þe dure, in þe burewe; at þare sepulchre-dure, at þere dure, for þere cheffare, of þere lawe, to þare blisse, to þere blysse, to-yeynes þere lawe, toward þare heuene; 2) myd þer ylke snode, [to þar hete; 3) in-to þe bureh

Questionable: bi þat oþer half

Dative: wo þere þeode

Neuter

Subject: þat mayde, þat blod, þet oþer volk, al þat mot, al þat oþer volk

Object: þat body, þat bred, þat ere, þat folk, þat lyht, þet word X 2, al þat baleu, þat beste child, þat eche lif

After prepositions: *group 1)* bi þe fure, bi þe fur, for þe cold, in þe godspelle, of þe meyde, of þe londe, of þe temple, to þe volke, to þe temple, vor alle þe gode; *group 2)* to þan eche lyhte, in þan yere, in þen ylke yere; to þen volke, to þan volke; *group 3)* vnder þat ere X 2

Plural

Subject object: þe blynde / dede / holte, þe gywes, þe faryseus, þe phariseus, þe byspes, þe maystres, þe prīnces etc; *pronoun* þeo þat X 2

Possessive: þere gywene kyng X 2 (*but also* þe gywene kyng)

After prepositions: *group 1)* to þe gywes X 3, to þe knyhtes; *group 2)* of þan alre kennuste, myd þon worde; *pronoun:* wiþ þon þat

The first point to note is the spread of *þe* in the paradigm. The masculine subject form *þe* and the feminine and plural subject/object forms *þeo þa* have merged; outside the *Passion*, the feminine form *þeo* occurs once in what would seem fairly emphatic use (*þeo luue þat ne may her abyde*, contrasting worldly love with heavenly, in *A Luue Ron* (Item 18, line 41). The plural *þeo* occurs pronominally, but never as a modifier, and the regular form in all these categories is *þe*. *þe* has also become regularized pre-consonantally in the prepositional/dative case in all genders except feminine, a development already incipient, as noted, in MSS Bodley 343 and Lambeth 487.

Despite the levelling of forms, the material leaves little doubt as to the survival of grammatical gender as a living feature. Virtually all the listed forms follow regular patterns, and none shows obvious confusion of gender. One possible example, *bi þat*

oper half, occurs in the *Passion*; here, the use of *pat* is probably influenced by the common collocation *pat oper*. The regularity is in striking contrast to the variation found in the *Peterborough Chronicle* (MS Bodleian Laud Misc 636) and in La3amon's *Brut* (for the former see Clark 1970: lii-lxxiv; Jones 1988: 129-170; for the latter, Jones 1988: 171-218; see also Millar 1991). Another test for the survival of grammatical gender is the choice of pronouns used to refer to inanimate objects; the following references are found in the *Passion*, and would seem to confirm gender as a living feature: *blysse - heo, hus - hit, calche - hine, crune - heo, rode - heo, curtel - he / hyne*.

Case distinctions also survive remarkably well. Forms derived from the OE accusative occur throughout in object function: the nominative/accusative distinction in the masculine is never blurred, nor do dative forms occur as object. Only three possessive forms appear; the construction *pe gywene kyng* may reflect a shift in agreement pattern (Clark 1970: lx n 2; Jones 1967b: 295).

The post-prepositional forms are of particular interest. The forms are divided into three groups: the reflexes of LWS datives in 1) pre-consonantal and 2) pre-vocalic position, and 3) the reflexes of LWS accusatives. The latter occur after the prepositions *pureh, fort, vpe, into, vnder*, all of which involve a sense of motion, real or transferred. A comparison with other examples in the manuscript suggests that these prepositions are almost always combined with accusative forms, presumably reflecting a continuation of OE usage. Groups 1 and 2, the dative forms, show retained *-n* before vowels but not before consonants.⁵⁴ This development, the beginnings of which were seen in Bodley 343 and Lambeth 487, appears in many thirteenth-century texts, and belongs to a widespread pattern surviving in PDE *a/an*. The alternation seems to be in the process of spreading into two categories which still retain distinctive forms, the accusative singular masculine and the dative singular feminine. In the former, final *-e* is occasionally dropped before a vowel, giving an incipient alternation *pene king - pen appel*. With *pen* generalized before vowels, such an alternation could easily be reinterpreted in analogy with the more frequently occurring dative forms, as *pe king - pen appel*, blurring the distinction between the accusative and dative. The dative singular feminine forms show the only clearly mixed usage in the material; while the *pere pare* type predominates, with occasional loss of final *-e* before vowels, several examples of *pe* also occur.

Accordingly, while most of the OE distinctions remain intact in the Jesus 29 system, the form *þe* has become by far the most frequent form (see Figure 75). The alternation *þe/þen* (with *þe* forms greatly outnumbering *þen* ones) appears in the majority of dative forms and seems to be in the process of spreading into the accusative singular masculine and dative singular feminine categories. As genitive forms are already rare, and may be disappearing through a shift in agreement pattern (see p 327), it would seem that the system is very close to being transformed into a simple distinction between *þe* and *þe(n)*, with the neuter *þat* as the sole exception, highly vulnerable to loss or reassignment. Such a system would seem to appear in the other late thirteenth-century miscellanies, in

	Masc	Fem	Neut	Pl
Nom	þe	þe (þeo)	þat þet	þe (þeo)
Acc	þene þane (þen+V)	þe (þeo)	þat þet	þe (þeo)
Gen	þes	-	-	þere
Dat+C	þe	þare/þere	þe	þe
Dat+V	þen/þan/ þon	þer	þen/þan/ þon	þen/þan/ þon

Figure 75: The 'the that' determiner system in Jesus 29

particular Digby 86 (D) and Trinity 323 (T). A similar development is also discernible in the AB-language, although the usage of the latter has already largely regularized uninflected *þe* (d'Ardenne 1936: 225).

AB shows an advanced stage of the breakdown of the OE gender and case system. As d'Ardenne (1936: 229) notes, gender has 'ceased to be part of the living system' although traces of it survive in various conventional usages. Of the determiners, fem/pl *þeo* survives, uninflected, in pronominal use; otherwise feminine forms occur only in fossilized phrases like *to þer eorðe* (d'Ardenne 1936: 224). The inflected forms *þen(e)*, *þon*, *þet* and *þes* - all, except *þen*, very rare - are used as minor variants beside uninflected *þe*. The forms are used in roughly the same functions as in Jesus 29, but with no clear distinction between accusative and dative case or between genders.

The syncretism of AB may be compared with that of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and *Brut*, in that all three texts seem to reflect an interference pattern between two diachronically separate systems (see p 327 and references there cited). However, while both La3amon and the last Peterborough scribe have been assumed to produce actively archaizing usage (Clark 1970: lxi; Stanley 1969), the traces of grammatical gender and accusative case in AB seem to be relicts from an earlier stage of transmission.

d'Ardenne (1936: 222) considers that 'the transition from the OE. system with grammatical gender and distinct accusative and dative forms... belongs to the actual period of literary history we are concerned with', i.e. that of the transmission of the AB texts; her general conclusion seems to be that the distinctions were retained in the authorial usage of the AB texts, but not in that of the scribe(s) whose usage survives.

The important difference between the usages of AB and Jesus 29 lies, not in the forms themselves, but in the demise and survival, respectively, of the OE case and gender *systems* as a living feature. Considering the earlier date of AB, and the conservative character of its orthography, it is likely that the difference reflects the decisively more northern affiliations of the dialect of AB. It is significant that the usage of the Nero MS of *Ancrene Wisse*, localized in S Worcestershire (Smith 1991: 62-63), shows a more conservative system than AB (d'Ardenne 1936: 204), as do the late thirteenth-century 'friar's miscellanies' localized in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (see p 258).

In the fourteenth-century material, the OE determiner system has disappeared

completely: in all the texts, including early ones like the poems by William Herebert (LP 7410), and MS Harley 2253 (9260), *þe* is generalized as an uninflected definite article, with very occasional occurrences of *þat* in fossilized combinations like *þat child*.⁵⁵

The loss of distinctive inflexional forms in other noun-phrase modifiers seems to follow approximately the same rate, if not exactly the same pattern. The reduction of forms is initially more rapid in the 'this' paradigm, where dative -m is lost early; in AB, the form *þis* has spread as a variant throughout the singular paradigm. In the fourteenth-century material, *þis* is fully generalized in the singular, with a plural form (*beose*, *þese*) retained in many, but not all, varieties (see p 331 ff). The loss of the strong adjectival inflexion is even more abrupt: while inflected forms still appear in Jesus 29 (*vnder godne king, almyhtyes godes*), AB contains no trace of them.

As the merger of the accusative and dative cases in the pronoun system seems to take place parallel to the above developments (see p 335), it may be concluded that the OE gender and case system probably survived, among at least some language users, up to the late thirteenth century in the core SWML area; in N Herefordshire it had, however, already disappeared by the third or fourth decade of the century. The loss seems to be fairly sudden; it takes place simultaneously in all affected word classes, with no chronological gap between the loss of gender and of the four-case system. No text shows partial gender loss and confusion such as are found in the *Peterborough Chronicle* or the *Brut*, nor are there any signs of such incipient patterns of a gender-free four-case system as have been suggested for the *Peterborough Chronicle* (see Jones 1967; also Samuels 1972: 156). The suddenness may partly reflect the paucity of evidence, and it is possible that the pattern of survival hides intermediate systems. However, there are some grounds for assuming that the suddenness may reflect the real pattern of loss. The varying usages of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and *Brut*, as well as of the *Worcester Fragments* (MS Worcester Cathedral F.174; see Smith 1991: 57-58), seem to be directly connected with archaizing tendencies and the study of older texts, and may represent partial acquisition rather than partial loss. The usage of Jesus 29, on the other hand, seems to show a real continuity of the OE system. It is reasonable to assume that the old and new systems would have existed side by side for some length of time, and that the uninflected forms spread into the spoken mode much earlier than into the written one. If

such a situation existed in the SW Herefordshire - NW Gloucestershire area in the late thirteenth century, it may be assumed that, once the system received no more support from the spoken mode, and the contact with (and motivation to uphold) OE-derived written tradition weakened enough, the grammatical structures would disappear over a single generation.⁵⁶

6.2.4 The determiner system (2): nearness and number

It was suggested above that the breakdown of the OE determiner system reached a stage (in the early thirteenth century in N Herefordshire, but later in the south and east), where most forms of ‘the/that’ would appear as *þe* or *þen*, leaving the neuter nom/acc form *þat* vulnerable to loss or change. As uninflected *þe* became the ‘unmarked’ determiner, *þat* gradually took over new functions: firstly, as the relative particle, replacing *þe*;⁵⁷ and, secondly, as part of a new pattern of determiners and demonstrative pronouns that gradually develops into the PDE system of *this* - *these* - *that* - *those*.

The latter development is, according to d’Ardenne (1936: 225), already under way in AB, although *þat* still tends to be avoided with nouns denoting persons. In the fourteenth-century material the modern use of *that* has become fully regular, and a new pattern of contrast, based on a semantic distinction between what might be termed the general meanings ‘near’ and ‘far’, emerges between *this* and *that*. The form *this* has, by the fourteenth century, become generalized in the singular; in many varieties, a plural form (*þes*, *þeos*, *þese*) also survives. With a combination of the oppositions of nearness and plurality, a four-way distinction gradually evolves in most varieties, corresponding to the pattern in present-day Standard English:

<i>this</i>	+	nearness	-	plural
<i>that</i>	-	nearness	-	plural
<i>these</i>	+	nearness	+	plural
<i>those</i>	-	nearness	+	plural

This pattern is present in many, but not all, of the *LALME* Herefordshire texts, and there is considerable variation in the actual forms. The following types occur in the material (for a full list of variant spellings see Appendix 3, Item lists 122, 225-27): *þis/þys/þʳ* ‘this’, *þat/þet/þʳ* ‘that’, *þes(e) þeos(e) þis(e) þuse* ‘these’ and *þo þat* ‘those’. The forms *þes(e)*, *þeos(e)* and *þuse* may all be derived from *þeos*, the regular plural form in AB and Jesus 29; the forms with final -e have been assumed to reflect addition, by analogy, of the adjectival plural -e (Wright and Wright 1979: 171). The form *þis* probably reflects a system where the *this* type, like *the*, has become fully generalized; the spelling *þise* may reflect a new plural formation with adjectival -e.

The most striking variation appears in the ‘those’ category, notoriously variable in present-day dialects. The main difference is between texts with plural *þo* and ones that lack a distinct plural; the latter have either generalized *þat*, or extend the use of the semantically close *þilke þulke* type (OE *þe-ilca* ‘the same’).⁵⁸ As the *þo* type seems to derive from the OE plural *þa*, its lack in some Southwest-Midland varieties might be connected with an underlying plural *þeo*, rather than *þa*. Accordingly, while the *this* and *that* types are generalized in all varieties as singular forms, a number of paradigms evolve, some of which have distinct plural forms for both *this* and *that*, others for *this* or *that* only, while a further type shows no distinction of number. The combinations found in the texts may, with some simplification, be divided into the following groups:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1a) | <i>þis - þat - þese - þo</i> | LPs 7280, 7301/2, 7320, 7330, 7350, 7380, 7420, 7450, 7481, 7510, 7520 |
| 1b) | <i>þis - þat - þise - þo</i> | LP 7370 |
| 2a) | <i>þis - þat - þese - þilke</i> | LPs 7310, 7391/2, 7460 |
| 2b) | <i>þis - þat - þese - þat</i> | LPs 7340, 7361 |
| 3) | <i>þis - þat - þis - þo</i> | LPs 7401, 9260 |
| 4a) | <i>þis - þat - þis - þilke</i> | LP 7500 |
| 4b) | <i>þis - þat - þis - þat</i> | LP 7430 |

One LP, 7260, has both *þat* and *þo* for ‘those’ the former being slightly more frequent (in the proportion 9:6). Only type 1 shows an unambiguous distinction between all four categories. Type 1a shows the common development in most non-northern dialects of ME, and is by far the most frequent. The texts that show whole or partial lack of distinction in number tend to belong to the earlier material. The form *þis* ‘these’ occurs only in fourteenth-century texts; in *LALME*, it shows a heavy concentration in Gloucestershire, but its spread in Herefordshire suggests that it may also have been frequent there. In all texts, *þis* is commonly used with ‘are’, e g *þis beð* ‘these are’.

The texts that lack plural *þo* ‘those’ seem to belong to the south and east; whether this reflects a synchronic or diachronic pattern is, however, difficult to tell from the present material. The plural use of *þat* occurs only in three southern texts; unfortunately, as no data for ‘those’ were gathered for the southern part of *LALME*, there is no evidence for the overall spread of the form. Only one text, LP 7430, shows generalization of both *þis* and *þat* without regard to number. All other texts that lack the form *þo* ‘those’ tend to use some form derived from OE *þe-ilca* ‘the same’ (e g *þilke*, *þulke*, *þeke*).

It is not easy to relate the written data to an underlying spoken system; in particular, it is impossible to tell how far the spread of the 1a) type in the later material reflects local patterns in the spoken mode. Some general points may, however, be made. Firstly, the lack of distinction between *this* and *these* does not generally coincide with that between *that* and *those*: the patterns thus seem to reflect different intermediate developments of the *this that* system, rather than a general trend. The instability of the ‘those’ category is reflected in the discontinuity of the ME forms, none of which seems to survive into present-day use.⁵⁹

Secondly, as those patterns that lack a full distinction in number tend to appear in the earlier texts, it may be assumed that they represent local developments that carry the syncretism of the OE determiners further. The eventual success of the four-way system is probably based on functional advantage: unlike *the*, the forms *this* and *that* continued to be used as demonstrative pronouns, and would thus function as heads of subject noun phrases. As noted on p 344 below, the present indicative verb system in the Herefordshire dialect comes to lack a regular distinction between third-person singular

and plural forms during the ME period: formal distinction of number thus becomes increasingly important within the noun phrase. The communicative inefficiency of phrases like *þis makeþ* ‘this/these make(s)’ or *þilke þat loueþ* ‘the one/those who love(s)’ suggests that the spread of the plural forms of the *these* and *tho* types could be seen as a process of systemic regulation, restoring a distinction of increasing importance, as the redundancy built in the OE inflexional system is lost.⁶⁰

6.2.5 The third-person pronoun system

From the point of view of dialect geography, the third-person pronoun system presents one of the most interesting grammatical developments in the ME Herefordshire material: as well as providing examples of systemic regulation and contact between different systems, it demonstrates a basic division of Herefordshire into two main dialect areas. The OE system, as it appears in Late West Saxon, is shown in Figure 76. Where the forms of the Vespasian Psalter Gloss differ from these, they are given in italics; otherwise, they follow the first alternatives (see also Campbell 1959: 289).

The major difference between the LWS and VP paradigms involves the nominative and accusative singular feminine forms. Various levelling processes seem to have taken place between the feminine and plural forms during the OE or transitional periods, with ensuing loss of the distinction between nominative and accusative in the feminine (cf p 324). Such a levelling process is shown in the VP system; however, the appearance of *hie* as a nominative singular feminine form has no counterpart in any known western or southwestern text (see p 305). However, a levelling of forms in the opposite direction appears in all the early SWML texts included in this study, with *heo* generalized in MSS Bodley 343, Lambeth 487 and parts of Jesus 29, and *ha/heo* similarly generalized in AB. It should, however, be noted that other parts of Jesus 29 show *hy* in the accusative singular feminine and in the plural paradigm; the evidence of other early texts (e.g. MS Digby 86) suggests that the levelled system was restricted to the areas north of Gloucestershire.

	Masc	Fem	Neut	Pl
Nom	he	heo <i>hie</i>	hit	hie hy hi heo
Acc	hine	hie hy	hit	hie hy hi heo
Gen	his	hire hyre	his	hi(e)ra heora hyra <i>heara</i>
Dat	him	hire hyre	him	him heom

Figure 76: The system of third-person pronouns in OE

In the texts that show this levelled system, a full four-case distinction is retained only in the masculine, all other nominative and accusative forms having merged, as they came to do in other word-classes. In the third-person pronoun system, however, this development is later reversed by a competing tendency, in accordance with the remainder of the pronoun system, where the original dative forms had already taken over accusative function in the OE period. This change takes place in the third-person system during the EME period. An early indication of this development appears in Bodley 343, with the plural dative form *heom* occurring in object position (Irvine 1993: lxxiv); however, the old accusative forms are still used more or less regularly in MSS Lambeth 487 and Jesus 29. As with the breakdown of the determiner system, no text in the present material presents a truly transitional picture: in AB, as in all fourteenth-century texts, the accusative function has already been fully taken over by the dative forms.⁶¹ Thus, while the reduction of the case system works in a different direction, it seems to take place more or less simultaneously with the loss of distinct accusative forms in determiners and adjectives (see p 330).

A further development separates the neuter form *hit* from the rest of the paradigm: as grammatical gender is lost, the forms *his* and *him* gradually become

associated with the masculine only, while *hit* becomes indeclinable. The beginnings of this development are, again, seen in AB (d'Ardenne 1936: 229). From the fourteenth century on, the new three-case system of third-person pronouns thus involves masculine, feminine and plural only:

Masc	Fem	Plural
he	heo	hi/heo
his	hire	heore
him	hire	heom

Except for the loss of accusative *hine*, and some purely phonetic developments (see p 339), the masculine third-person pronoun is affected by little formal change between OE and PDE. In contrast, the feminine and plural forms undergo a series of developments of considerable interest, which will be outlined below. The numerous spelling variants of 'she' and 'they' (and, to a lesser extent, of 'their' and 'them') in the Herefordshire material involve considerable problems of derivation, typology and phonological development; for the sake of clarity, it will therefore make sense to discuss the actual forms before considering their development as a system. Most of the discussion will concentrate on the forms of 'she', the historical development of which is of considerable interest.

The forms of the pronoun 'she'

It was noted above (p 334) that most early Southwest-Midland texts show a levelled system, with a *ha* or *heo* type form generalized for the nominative and accusative categories both in the feminine singular and in the plural. The regular OE form for the nominative singular feminine, *heo*, appears in all these texts; however, the dominant form in AB is *ha*. The etymology of *ha* was ingeniously explained by d'Ardenne (1936: 156-

57), who derives the form, as well as the oblique forms *hare ham* in the plural paradigm, from a ‘cross-influence’ development in analogy with the forms of the determiner. The two paradigms show nearly identical sets of forms, marked by initial *þ*- and *h*- respectively; a refashioning of the ‘irregular’ pronoun forms in the accusative singular feminine and throughout the plural would result in the actual AB forms and give the following rhyming pairs: *heo þeo*, *ha/þa*, *hare/þare*, *ham/þam*. This derivation is to be preferred to the alternative theory which derives *ha* from a weak-stress reduction of a stress-shifted *heo* *hó*; as d’Ardenne notes, the latter would be expected to produce *ho* or *he*.

Relating the early *ha* and *heo* forms to the later evidence causes some difficulty. The OE-derived forms for ‘she’ in the Herefordshire material are *heo*, *hue*, *he*, *ho*, *hoe*, *a*; of these, *ho* and *a* occur as minor variants only.⁶² A comparison with the overall orthographic usage of the texts suggests that *heo*, *hue* and *hoe* may be grouped together: in each case (with the exception noted below), the symbol used for the vowel segment occurs elsewhere in the text for OE *eo*. On the other hand, the use of *he* for ‘she’ would seem unlikely unless the form had in the spoken mode merged with *he* ‘he’; again, where *he* occurs as the regular form, OE *eo* in general appears as <e>. A number of later texts retain *heo* but otherwise show only <e> spellings for OE *eo*;⁶³ this may reflect either a semantically conditioned retention of rounding in this particular word or the retention of a traditional spelling; in the majority of cases at least, the latter is probably more likely (see pp 342, 354)

The two remaining forms, *a* and *ho*, are marginal in the Herefordshire material. The former occurs for both ‘she’ and ‘they’ in a number of Southwest-Midland texts, and is the general form for all third-person pronouns in MS X of the *Piers Plowman* C-text (see p 98); its occurrence mainly in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, but not in Herefordshire, may be assumed to reflect the later retention of initial *h*- in the latter area (see Appendix 4, Map 53).

In the *LALME* material, *ho* ‘she’ appears in two areas, a NWML one, centred on Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and a SWML one, centred on Worcestershire (see Appendix 4, Map 53). The more northern area agrees remarkably well with the modern distribution of forms of the *hoo*, *oo* type, with which a continuity must surely be

assumed (see maps in Duncan 1972: 186, 188). According to Duncan (1972: 189), the modern *(h)oo* ‘presumably indicates a straightforward development from ME *ho*’ and assumes a phonological development parallel to that of the neighbouring *shoo* type. Smith (1996: 199 and personal communication) suggests that the vowel in *hoo* and *shoo* derives from OE *heo* via a stress-shift, typical of Scandinavian-influenced areas, and a selection of rounded variants to maintain gender distinction; this theory is particularly attractive in that the geographical distributions of *shoo* and *hoo* respectively correspond well with the focal and marginal areas of Scandinavian influence suggested by Samuels (1985 [1989], *passim*). The more southern distribution of *ho* can, however, hardly be derived from Scandinavian influence. Unlike the northern forms, the *ho* spellings in the SWML area are most common in the early period, in particular the thirteenth century. In the texts here studied, it seems that *ho* as a regular form for ‘she’ tends to coincide with the general use of <o> as a symbol for OE *eo* (see p 273). Accordingly, the forms may simply reflect an EME spelling convention, and represent the same spoken-mode type as the spellings *heo*, *hue*, *hoe* (see p 337 above). If these explanations are seen as plausible, the two areas of *ho* must be seen as entirely unrelated, with only the northern spelling having obvious phonic significance.

Forms of the *she* type appear already in some fourteenth-century texts, the spellings as a whole including *sche*, *schee*, *she* and rare *scheo*.⁶⁴ The origins of *she* have been much discussed elsewhere, and the question is of little direct relevance here (see e.g. Duncan 1972, *passim* and Smith 1996: 199-200); while it occurs relatively commonly in the texts, it does not replace *heo*, which still appears in the late fifteenth century, and it is uncertain to what extent it ever entered the spoken dialect. This question is connected with the etymology of the present-day dialectal forms, which may, finally, be considered.

Leeds (1985: 23) states that, in present-day Herefordshire speech, ‘the unstressed form for he and she is *er*, the stressed forms being *him* and *her*’. This statement (which ignores general h-dropping by distinguishing *er* and *her*) illustrates all three major problems connected with the present-day system: the merger of ‘he’ and ‘she’, the presence of final -r in both forms, and the connection between the forms and the ‘case-switching’ common in SW dialects.⁶⁵ According to Duncan (1972: 191), the form *er* is usually pronounced with ‘a long schwa + the *r*-colouring or *r* appropriate to the region

concerned'. The form has generally been identified with *her*, and assumed to represent the general southwestern tendency of reversing subject and object forms (see p 313). However, Duncan (1972: 190) notes the possibility that *er* might have developed from ME *he(o)*, the distribution pattern of which is strikingly similar to that of ModE *er* (see maps in Duncan 1972: 186, 188). According to her, the use of *er* 'she', unlike other case-switched pronouns, is in many areas (including Herefordshire) consistent in both stressed and unstressed position, and its distribution does not completely coincide with the area of case-switching. Finally, while case-switching generally involves a full reversal, as in *her told she*, actual *her/she* switching seems to be limited to a small area in the Southwest, and is not recorded in the West Midland area. Instead, Duncan (1972: 191) suggests a development whereby the reflex of ME *heo* would have become similar enough to the phonetic realization of *her* to 'come to be thought of as the same form'; however, she points out that this does not account for the final -r in the subject form.

The explanation might lie in so-called hyper-rhoticity, or unhistorical addition of *r*, which was noted in 5.4 above to be a typical characteristic of the modern dialect of Herefordshire (see p 314). Ihalainen (1994: 216) suggests that it probably accounts for the merger of the masculine and feminine pronouns: 'The feminine pronoun derives from *her* whereas the masculine pronoun comes from the weak form *a* [ə], which induces an *r* in final position'. If it is, however, assumed that the masculine and feminine forms were already identical (see p 342), a weak distinction in the feminine paradigm between a subject form [ə] and an object form [ə(r)] might reinforce a tendency to hyper-rhoticity in the subject forms; ultimately, such tendencies would lead to the selection of -*r* forms because of their greater distinctiveness. It may also be noted that hyper-rhotic forms like *mer* 'me' and *ther* 'thee' occur in the present-day dialect (Leeds 1985: 15, 23).

The forms of the pronoun 'they'

Most examples of the reflex of *heo* 'they' appear in texts before 1350, and it seems to have been rapidly replaced by the Scandinavian-derived *they* type (< ON *þeir*). Forms include *heo*, *hoe*, *hue* and *he*; AB and a few related texts also have *ha*, while some N

Herefordshire texts show the minority form *α*. These forms are mainly confined to the northern part of the area, although some appear as far south as the borders of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire (see Appendix 4, Map 56). The southern area, including Herefordshire south of the Wye and most of Gloucestershire, shows forms of the *hi* type (OE *hie*); these forms, which include *hi*, *hy*, *hij*, *hie*, *hii*, seem to survive considerably longer than the *he(o)* type. It appears that the *heo/hi* isogloss marks a significant dialectal division in the Southwest-Midland area (see p 245), and it is of great interest for the patterning of gender and number oppositions discussed below.

In the ME material, the *they* type appears from the late fourteenth century on as a regularly used form, and shows a large number of spelling variants, the most common of which are *pey*, *pay*, *pei* and *pai*. In the present-day dialect, both *they* and (unstressed) *'em* appear as the subject form, while *'em* or (stressed) *them* occur as object (Duncan 1972: 190, Leeds 1974: 23, Upton *et al* 1994: 487-88). As in southern and western dialects in general, the Scandinavian-derived oblique forms of the *their*, *them* types (ON *peira*, *paim*) reach the area at a late stage, and do not appear, except as very minor relicts, in any of the Herefordshire ME texts.

Diachronic and diatopic patterns

From the preceding discussion, it may be inferred that the subject forms in the third-person pronoun system show two different patterns in the EME period. In the northern part of the SWML area, the feminine and plural forms are identical, while the southern part shows a three-way distinction:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------------|
| a) | <i>he - heo - heo</i> | (northern) |
| b) | <i>he - heo - hi</i> | (southern) |

The early Herefordshire texts show almost exclusively pattern a). This pattern has, however, virtually disappeared from the later material, where it occurs only in the conservative LP 7500. Pattern b), on the other hand, occurs commonly in the southern

Herefordshire material, including relatively late texts like LP 7320. As noted above (p 340), *they* type plural forms appear from the fourteenth century on, reintroducing a full distinction between singular and plural in those varieties that would earlier have shown the a) pattern. The actual patterns shown in the material may be listed as follows, with some simplification of variant spellings:

a)

<i>he - ha/heo - ha/heo</i>	AB
<i>he - heo - heo</i>	LP 7440 (part)
<i>he - hoe - hoe</i>	LP 7410
<i>he - he(o) - he(o)</i>	LP 9260
<i>he - heo - heo</i>	LP 7500

b)

<i>he - heo - hi</i>	LPs 7430, 7380, 7440 (part)
<i>he - he - hi</i>	LPs 7310, 7320
<i>he - heo - þei/hi</i>	LPs 7280, 7391, 7392

a/b + they

<i>he - heo - þei</i>	LPs 7330, 7450, 7460
-----------------------	----------------------

a/b + they + she

<i>he - s(c)he - þei</i>	LPs 7260, 7340, 7350, 7361, 7370, 7420, 7481, 7510, 7520
--------------------------	--

The distribution of these patterns is shown in Figure 77. While the underlying north-south pattern of the distribution of the *heo* and *hi* type plurals is clear, the map may give the impression that the *they* forms replace the earlier forms at more or less an equal rate. However, if the pre-1350 material is excluded, it becomes clear that, apart from a cluster in N Worcestershire, the *heo* type disappears much earlier than the *hi* type (see Figure 78). The approximate retention of the earlier isogloss, and its agreement with several other north/south divisions within Herefordshire (see p 245), suggest that Figure 78 does not reflect a random phase in the continuous southward extension of *they*, but a stage where *hi*, but not *heo*, survives, that may have lasted for some considerable time. The *heo* type, accordingly, seems to have been replaced very rapidly, while the *hi* type continued, on the whole, to resist replacement throughout the ME period.

A reason for the different rates of survival is suggested by the phonological developments that affect the respective patterns. The reflex of OE *eo*, /ø(:)/, seems to have become unrounded in most SWML varieties during the fourteenth century; in parts of S Herefordshire, the process may have begun already in the thirteenth century (see pp 351, 355). In the north, this would result in the completely ambiguous pattern *he* - *he* - *he*, a pattern found, as noted above, in MS X of the *Piers Plowman* C-text, in the form *a* - *a* - *a* (see p 337). This might be expected to lead to considerably reduced efficiency of communication, especially as it seems to coincide in time and area with a verbal system where few verbs would retain a formal distinction between third-person singular and plural in the present tense (see p 344 below; also Samuels 1972: 85). A rapid introduction of the *they* type would solve this ambiguity, shared with other Midland dialects, the southern system, on the other hand, would have been under no comparable pressure to adopt the new form.

In both systems, the unrounding of /ø(:)/ would have caused gender distinction to be lost, with merger of the 'he' and 'she' forms in *he*. The form *heo* continues to appear throughout the ME period, *he* being rare; it is, however, highly doubtful whether *heo* in the fifteenth century would still reflect a rounded vowel. As the rounding is generally lost much earlier throughout the rest of the lexis, the spellings may simply reflect a retention of the formal gender distinction in the written mode, where the distinction is of greater pragmatic importance than in speech (see p 354).

Figure 77

Distribution of patterns
of the third-person
pronoun system in
Herefordshire

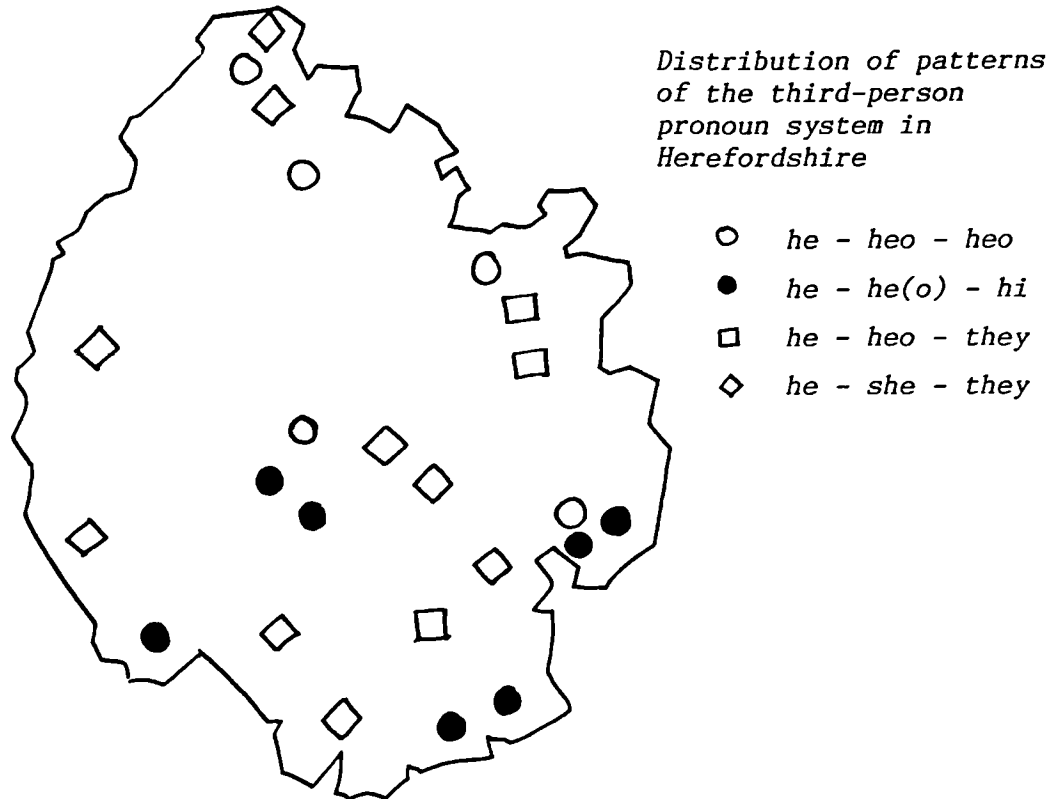
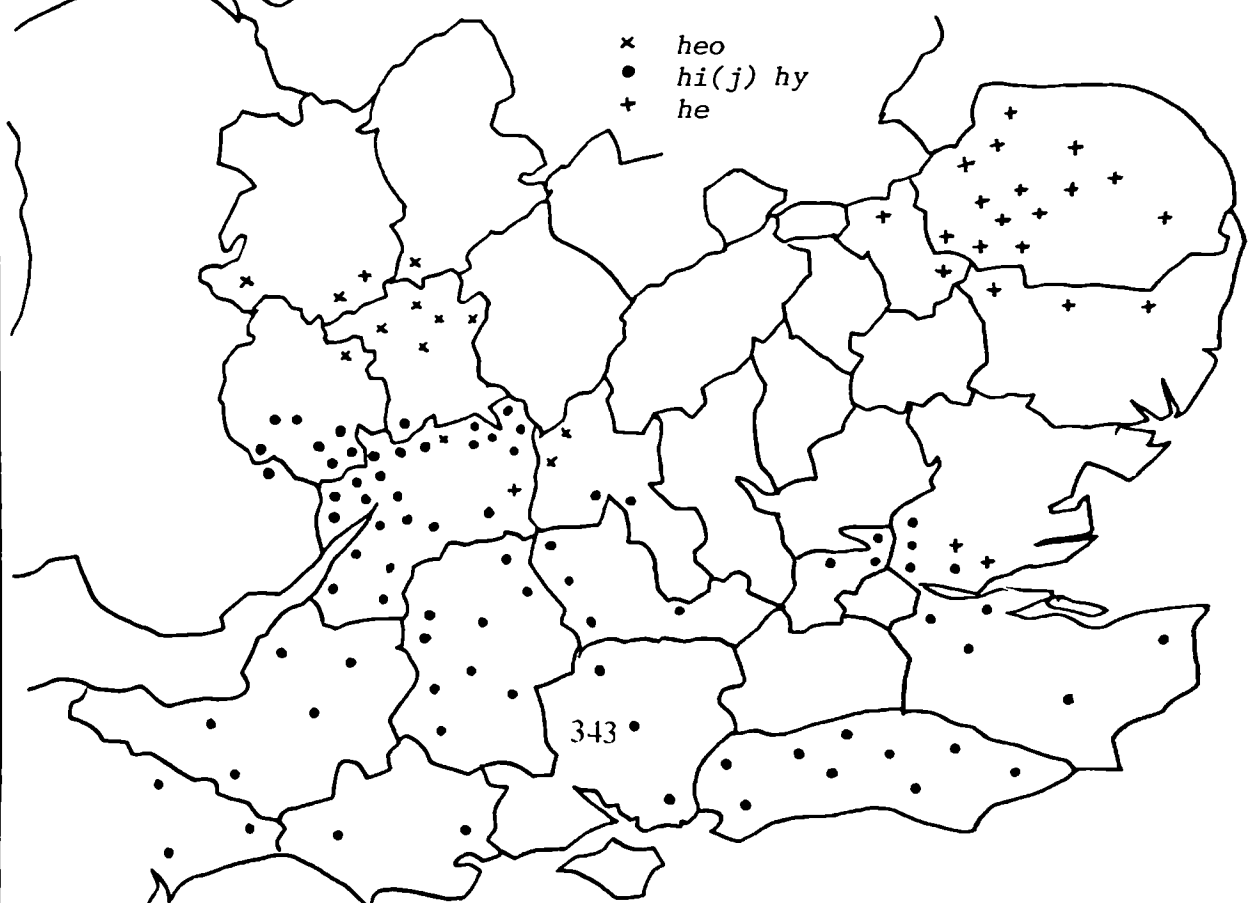


Figure 78 Distribution of heo and hi 'they' in the
LME material



The list of patterns given on p 341 above shows that the form *s(c)he* is less frequent than the plural *they* type, and only appears in texts that also show *they*. The latter point may simply suggest that the spread of *she* took place later; however, it is probable that the functional pressure for distinguishing gender was not as strong as that for number. The present-day pattern, with a two-way distinction between singular *er* and plural *they/’em* may well show a direct continuity with a late ME pattern *he - they*, whatever the exact derivation of *er* (see pp 338-39). The appearance of *she* in the Herefordshire texts might thus reflect, above all, the adoption of the new form into the *written* language, replacing the equally distinctive but archaic and provincial *heo* with a much more widely used form.

6.2.6 The singular/plural distinction in present indicative verbs

In most texts in the present material, the present indicative forms of regular verbs show no distinction between third-person singular and plural, both generally showing the ending *-eþ* or a spelling variant (see Appendix 3, Item lists 249 and 253). The endings, distinct in OE, had become identical with the merger of unstressed vowels (see Jordan 1968: 124-25). In southern dialects, syncopated third-person singular forms of strong and class I weak verbs would have retained a partial distinction of number; these seem to have been a West-Saxon feature in OE, with virtually no examples in ‘Anglian’ texts, including the Vespasian Psalter Gloss (Campbell 1959: 299-300, 322-323). In the present material, syncopated forms occur mainly in the earlier texts. Only the relatively southern LPs 7440 (Jesus 29) and 7410 (William Herebert), of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century respectively, commonly have syncope after all consonants; the more northern AB and LP 9260 (Harley 2253) have syncope only after dentals. In the later material, syncopated forms are increasingly rare, and restricted to dental stems (see Appendix 3, Item lists 251-52). Accordingly, most verbs show no distinction of number in the present indicative; however, many ‘irregular’ verbs, notably *be* and *have*, still retain the distinction in ME.

It was suggested above (p 342) that the merger of the third-person pronouns in the northern SWML system, together with the lack of distinction of number in verbs, led to reduced efficiency in communication. This situation, shared by a large part of the Midland area, was remedied by a rapid replacement of the native plural form with Scandinavian *they* (see pp 341-42). It has been suggested that the pres ind pl ending *-en*, typical of the Midland varieties of ME, was similarly selected to compensate for the loss of distinction in the pronoun system (see Samuels 1972: 85-86). As the plural *-en* occurs in a number of Herefordshire texts, it may be worth enquiring whether its appearance here might be connected with this development. A distinction should, however, be made between the spread of *-en* in regular verbs, and that of the *-n* ending in verbs like *be*, *have*, all of which seem to show somewhat different patterns of distribution. The following list shows the three different combinations of the present plural forms of the regular verbs and *be*, that appear in the *LALME* Herefordshire material.

<i>makeþ - beþ</i>	LPs 7280, 7310, 7340, 7370, 7380, 7391/2, 7410, 7420, 7430, 7460, 7500, 9260
<i>makeþ - ben</i>	LPs 7302, 7320, 7350, 7361, 7481
<i>maken - ben</i>	LPs 7260, 7301, 7330, 7401, 7450, 7510, 7520

The form *ben* 'are' is considerably more widespread than the ending *-en* in regular verbs, while the latter never occurs without the former. No clear diatopic patterns seem to emerge from the material; however, the *beþ/ben* distinction seems to show a chronological correspondence, *beþ* occurring mainly in early texts and *ben* in late ones. No such distinction appears in the regular verbs, although, as might be expected, all very early (pre-1350) texts show *-eþ* only.

Another correspondence does, however, emerge from the list. Of the seven texts that show *maken*, three (LPs 7401, 7450 and 7510) were classified in Chapter 3 as containing a partially mixed usage with a separable element of a NML or eastern dialect, while LPs 7260 and 7520 were also noted to contain such traces (see pp 240-41).

Accordingly, it seems likely that the *-en* plural in regular verbs was not a prominent feature of the Herefordshire dialect; however, even if it is textually conditioned in the seven texts, its appearance must certainly reflect its familiarity to the scribes. It is also possible that *-en* in the two northern texts, LPs 7510 and 7520, might reflect the active usage of the scribes. On the other hand, while *-en* in regular verbs is unlikely to have been part of the general usage of Herefordshire, except perhaps the far north, *ben* seems to have become current in the area during the *LALME* period, replacing earlier *bep/beop*; it is significant that the resulting *makep - ben* pattern is shown in some of the latest texts (LPs 7350, 7481).

It thus seems that the verbal system of the Herefordshire dialect did not, during the ME period, redevelop the distinction between singular and plural that was lost during the late OE and EME periods. The spread of *ben*, as well as a few other forms like *han* 'have', and the wide ME distribution of *-en* in the Midlands suggest that the type would not have been totally alien in the area; its failure to spread probably indicates that there was no such gap between the unrounding of *heo* and the adoption of *they* as seems to have existed in, for example, East Anglia (see Samuels 1972: 85).

The post-ME development suggests an overall survival of the ME patterns, with a further syncretism of forms. The ME ending *-eth* has been replaced with *-s*, and spread to all categories of the present indicative; moreover, *be*, *have* and *do* have become similarly generalized, except for the distinctive forms retained in the second person singular (*thee bist hast dost*; see pp 312-13). The singular/plural patterns of LME and PDE usage may thus be compared:

LME	he makep/is - they/hi makep/ben
PDE	er makes/be - they makes/be

In PDE, the singular/plural distinction is marked by the subject only. This syncretism of verb forms might be seen as a major long-term trend, and may, in its turn, account for the success of the strongly marked *er - they* distinction in this variety.

6.2.7 Conclusions

It has been attempted in this section to trace some of the long-term developments connected with, and evolving from, the breakdown of the OE inflexional system, with special reference to three subsystems, each of which illustrate different aspects of the development. The developments within each subsystem have, however, been shown to be strongly interconnected, and certain overall trends may be discerned in each of them.

The loss of the OE grammatical structures of gender and case was shown to take place relatively suddenly throughout the system, at a stage when most, but not all, formal distinctions had disappeared. The breakdown of the inflexional system led to a large-scale loss of singular/plural distinction, affecting the adjectives, the regular verbs and the definite article, with the distinction increasingly marked only in the headword of the subject noun phrase. It was suggested that this trend is evident in two late ME developments discussed above: the PDE four-way distinction of the *this that/these/those* pattern, and the rapid adoption, in the N Herefordshire system, of the Scandinavian plural pronoun *they*. Conversely, the trend within the verb system has, since ME, continued to be towards syncretism; the overall effect, much more marked than in PDE Standard English, is a general loss of redundancy in the singular/plural system. It may be assumed that this loss is balanced by other developments in the spoken system; this question falls, however, outside the present study.

6.3 Developments in the stressed vowels

6.3.1 The front rounded vowels

The early ME vowel system contained four front rounded vowels, a close and mid one, each with a long and short version. The mid front vowel, usually represented as /ø(:)/, derived principally from OE long and short *eo* of all origins; it also occurs in French loanwords like *people*, *meoise*, and Scandinavian loanwords with original *jo:/ju:*, e.g. *meoke* (< *mjiukr*). It appears most frequently spelled with <eo>; alternative symbols are <oe>, <o>, <ue>⁶⁶. The close front vowel, /y(:)/, derived mainly from OE long and short *y* from the *i*-mutation of *u*; where the rounding is retained, it appears as <u>, or, in length only, as <uy, ui>. During the ME period, both sets of front rounded vowels were gradually unrounded, usually to /e(:)/ and /i(:)/ respectively. The processes of unrounding take place at markedly different times in different dialects, beginning in the northern and East Midland varieties already in the late OE period (see Jordan 1968: 63). It is generally agreed that the rounded vowels are retained longest in the Southwest Midland area, where Jordan (1968: 65, 99) dates their eventual disappearance to the fourteenth, or even fifteenth century. It should be of some interest to trace the unrounding process in the Herefordshire material, especially as earlier studies of surrounding areas (Sundby 1963; Kristensson 1987) provide good opportunities for comparison.

The development of o(:) (< OE eo)

The approximate dates given for the disappearance of the mid-front rounded vowel, /ø(:)/, vary greatly between different accounts. The most common view seems to be that the rounding was retained up to the end of the fourteenth century (e.g. Wright and Wright 1979: 31). Jordan (1968: 99) holds that the long vowel is retained, in WML and

parts of the south, until the fifteenth century, longer, it seems, than /y:/. On the other hand, Sundby (1963) and Kristensson (1987), both of whom base their study on the onomastic evidence of Lay Subsidy Rolls, date the unrounding in the core SWML area (in Sundby's case, Worcestershire) to the fourteenth century, the process being already under way in the early part of the century, and proceeding much more rapidly than the unrounding of the close front vowels.

The varying opinions reflect in part, it seems, the type of source material and the selective criteria adopted, as well as the interpretation of the data. A major problem, both as regards literary and documentary sources, concerns traditional spellings, which are almost certain to survive for some time after the change has taken place in the spoken mode. This might be assumed to be particularly true of place-names, where <eo> spellings survive to the present day (e.g. Leominster, Weobley); however, traditional spellings may equally well be expected in literary texts. On the other hand, literary texts may skew the evidence in two directions: while conventional spellings may hide unrounding in the spoken mode, scribal practice (e.g. constrained selection, or the selection of colourless variants, see pp 36 f, 40 f) may result in the appearance of unrounded forms while rounding is still a living feature. The former type may be identified from 'back spellings', e.g. ones that extend the use of a symbol like <eo> to unhistorical environments; however, even such cases are not necessarily straightforward to interpret.

The Herefordshire material presents a number of difficulties of the kinds noted above. An overview of the data is given in Figure 79; the vowel symbols represent those used in main forms and regularly occurring variants. For simplicity, the items are limited to eight words in which a development of OE /eo(:)/ is expected; these are selected to include the most frequently attested items, and to provide a comparison between the long and short vowel. The first five items (OE *heo* 'she', *be*, *see*, *free*, *thief*) represent the long vowel, while the remaining three represent the short version, *devil* by back mutation of /e:/ and subsequent shortening, and *earth* and *heart* by breaking. Three texts, LPs 7310, 7340 and 7400 provide insufficient evidence and are excluded; they show <e> spellings only. The texts are divided chronologically into three groups: 1) thirteenth century, 2) early fourteenth century, and 3) later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

	heo	be	see	free	thief	devil	earth	heart
1)								
AB	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo
J/7440	eo	eo/e	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo	eo/o
2)								
7410	oe	oe/eo	oe/e	-	-	-	oe	eo/oe/e
9260	ue/e	e/ue	e/ue	e/eo	e	e	e/eo	e/ue
3)								
7260	-	e	e/eo	e	e	e	e	e
7280	eo	e	e	-	e	e	e	e
7300	ue	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7320	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7330	eo	e/eo	eo/e	eo	eo	e	e	e
7350	-	e	e	-	e	e	e	e
7361	-	e	e	-	e	-	e	e/a
7370	-	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7380	eo/ue	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7390	eo/ue	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7420	-	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7430	eo	e	e/eo	-	eo/e	-	e	e
7450	eo	e	e	-	-	e	e	e
7460	eo	e	e/eo	e/eo	e	e	e	e
7481	eo	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
7500	eo	e	e	e	-	e	e	e
7510	eo	e	e	e	-	-	e	e
7520	eo	eo/e	e/eo	e	e/eo	-	e/eo	e

Figure 79: The reflex of OE eo(ɜ) in the Herefordshire material

The material suggests, at first sight, a relatively rapid process of unrounding during the early part or middle of the fourteenth century: while the earliest texts show regular <eo>, spellings with <e> have become the rule in the later material (with the single, and significant, exception of *heo* ‘she’; see p 354). The two texts of the early fourteenth century show, as might be expected, stages of varying usage.

The unlisted material for /ø(:)/, of which a major part is given in Appendix 3 (Item lists 168-205), largely agrees with this general pattern. Thus, in items other than those shown in Figure 79, <eo> occurs occasionally for the long vowel, but virtually never for the short one, in a number of group 3) texts. Forms include *deol* (OE *deol* ‘sorrow’), *fleon* ‘flee’, *leof* (OE *leof* ‘dear’), *leom* (OE *leoma* ‘light’), *meoke* ‘meek’, *neode* ‘need’, *preost* ‘priest’; these are, however, exceptional in most texts. Only LPs 7330 and 7520 show frequent <eo>, while the early LP 7430 and the conservative LP 7500 show <eo> restricted to a few lexical items, in the latter notably *deol* and *leom*.

While the earliest texts show a very regular usage, it should be noted that both AB and J (LP 7440) represent very conservative traditions of orthography. The latter shows, in fact, occasional <e> for expected <eo>, as well as possible back spellings like *heo* ‘he’, suggesting, perhaps, some uncertainty in the use of <eo>. Interestingly, the contemporary miscellany Digby 86 (D), localized very near J, in NW Gloucestershire, shows almost exclusively <e>, the digraph <oe> being used regularly only in the pronouns *hoe* ‘she/they’ and *hoere* ‘their’. This pattern suggests that /ø(:)/ and /e(:)/ had merged in the scribe’s dialect; Sundby’s suggestion that some early scribes, ‘lacking an unambiguous uniform symbol for the crucial vowel, sometimes resorted to *e*’ (1963: 143) is not plausible in view of the pronoun spellings.

The two early fourteenth-century texts, LPs 7410 (William Herebert) and 9260 (Harley 2253) are of particular interest. While both seem to represent a transitional stage in the development, as shown in Figure 79, their textual backgrounds are very different, and should be taken into account when the evidence is interpreted.

The text by William Herebert is an authorial holograph (see p 182), and variation in it may be assumed directly to reflect his own usage, rather than being textually conditioned. Interestingly, a marked change takes place within the text: while the first portion shows <e> only, <oe> becomes gradually more frequent from the second poem

onwards, and is then used virtually without exception throughout the text⁶⁷. To illustrate this, the relevant forms in the three first poems may be listed:

- 1) *erthlich, heuene, here, sterre, sterre, verre, heuene, newe, wele, boe*;
- 2) *beth, herte, y-se, tre, troe, be, hoem, troe, hoere, boe*;
- 3) *wele, boe, doere, heuene, woe, boedes, moeketh, hoe, woe, hoere, here, moekynge, poenne, boe*.

The stretch where <e> predominates may be assumed to reflect a type of ‘working-in’ usage, even if it may, in this case, be authorial rather than scribal; in other words, Herebert seems to adjust only gradually to this part of his own orthography, which might, then, be assumed to reflect conventional usage rather than his own spoken system. That /ø(:)/ may have merged with /e(:)/ in his own speech is also suggested by the rhyming evidence; as Gneuss (1960: 189) notes, this shows ‘at least partial’ merger of /eo(:)/ and /e(:)/; so *þe* : *troe*, *wede* : *noede* and *þe* : *boe*.

Another indication that Herebert’s <oe> spellings are likely to be purely conventional is the spelling *woe* ‘we’ in the third poem; while this might indicate rounding after *w*, it is probably more likely to be a back spelling. Other examples of untraditional use of <oe> in the text are *þoenne* ‘then’, *oeuch* ‘each’, *stoede* ‘stead’, *moeche* ‘much’, *doede* ‘did’. None of these provides an indisputable case of hypercorrecting <eo> for /e(:)/; in particular, the three last forms are ambiguous in that they may represent variants with either /e/ or /y/, i.e. *stede/stude* etc, both sets of which occur in the area. A possible merger of /ø(:)/ and /y(:)/ in some SWML varieties has been suggested (Sundby 1963: 146); however, considering the evidence as a whole, it is probably more likely that the spellings represent some form of hyperadaptation of <eo>.

As Herebert’s own usage no longer seems to have distinguished /ø(:)/ and /e(:)/, the regularity of his use of <oe> is striking, and it is perhaps significant that all the instances of probable hyperadaptation involve words that have common variants with a rounded vowel. It is likely that the rounded vowels were familiar to him, and that his usage reflects either a coexistence of spoken varieties with and without /ø(:)/ or a persistent orthographic tradition; most probably, perhaps, both.

The evidence of MS Harley 2253 (LP 9260) is of a different kind. This miscellany, which is somewhat more northern, and slightly later, than the Herebert text, seems at first sight to show a more advanced stage of unrounding. However, a large proportion of the individual texts in Harley 2253 are copied from varieties where rounding would not have been retained, notably northern (several lyrics) and Kentish (*King Horn*), and it has been shown that the scribe was not a thorough translator (see p 235). The relative frequency of <eo>, <ue> and <e> also varies considerably between the different texts. Accordingly, the material simply suggests that all three spellings were acceptable to the scribe; there appear to be no back spellings to indicate loss of /ø(:)/.

Only two later texts, LPs 7330 and 7520, show frequent <eo>. These texts, dated before or around 1400, show nearly regular <eo> for the long vowel, while the short version appears almost exclusively as <e>. Both texts show some back spellings; however, as in the case of William Herebert, these are neither numerous or straightforward to interpret. LP 7330 has once *heo* 'he', and once *3eo* 'ye'; otherwise, all <eo> spellings seem historically correct. However, forms like *deorke* 'dark', *beorke* 'bark' disagree with the normally smoothed forms in the Herefordshire area (see Appendix 3, Item list 199). In view of some other examples in the text of very archaic forms that are impossible to reconcile with fourteenth-century Herefordshire usage (see p 130), the <eo> spellings should probably be treated with great caution.

LP 7520 has regular *þeo* 'the', which seems like obvious hyperadaptation; however, with the exception of a single *neo* 'nor', the use of <eo> is otherwise historically correct. As the 'unhistorical' examples of <eo> are restricted to low-stress words, they might simply represent variant spellings of a centralized unstressed vowel, which the scribe normally spells <u> in inflexional endings. That the usage of 7520 might reflect the survival of /ø:/ is thus somewhat less implausible than in the case of 7330.

Jordan (1968: 99) and Sundby (1963: 144) note that the long vowel is retained considerably longer than the short version; an explanation of this, based on the greater functional load of the long vowel, was first suggested by Sundby (1963: 144-145) and has been argued further by Kristensson (1977). The present evidence confirms the earlier loss of the short vowel: with the exception of a few doubtful forms in LPs 7330

and 7520, the short vowel appears as <e> in all texts from the mid-fourteenth century on, while survival of the long rounded vowel may be taken to stretch at least to the end of the century. In the case of *heo* ‘she’, <eo> spellings last considerably longer still; this particular usage will, however, require special consideration.

It was noted in 5.2.5 above that unrounding of /ø:/ in *heo* would result in a major loss of distinction in the third-person pronoun system, particularly in the northern part of the area, where *heo* stood for ‘they’ as well as ‘she’. As *heo* seems to be the only lexical item where EME /ø:/ carried such functional weight, it is not surprising that it should retain this feature longer than other words. The gap seems, however, exceedingly long, with *heo* still appearing in late fifteenth-century texts (e.g. LPs 7481 and 7510).

Whether this reflects a spoken-mode survival of rounding in a single lexical item, or simply conventional spelling, is difficult to determine (see p. 342). The relatively rare *he* forms are of interest here. The two texts where *he* is used exclusively for both ‘he’ and ‘she’ are the southeastern LPs 7310 and 7320; both are late texts, and the latter is of particular value as evidence, as it seems to be a very thorough scribal translation, with little evidence of familiarity with older literary traditions (see pp. 119–19). The evidence of these texts suggests that *heo* ‘she’ was unrounded at least in some SE Herefordshire varieties in the fifteenth century; the additional evidence of *he* as a minor variant in nine of the fourteen texts that show rounded forms suggests that the unrounding was probably very common, if not universal. As with /ø:/ in general, a long period of coexistence of rounded and unrounded variants must be assumed; however, it is probable that *heo* in many, perhaps most, cases in the fifteenth century simply reflects a conventional spelling. In general, gender distinction would be more important as a tracking device in the written system than in the spoken; in the latter, the context would generally rule out misunderstandings.⁶⁸ It may be assumed that most spoken varieties in fifteenth-century Herefordshire had the same pronoun system, with reduced gender distinction, as the present-day variety, and that the use of the available marked *heo* and *sche* spellings represent a distinction specific to the written mode.

The question remains whether it is possible to trace any diatopic patterns with regard to the unrounding of /ø(:)/. Both Sundby (1963) and Kristensson (1987) assume that the unrounding takes place somewhat earlier in the northern part of the area, and

Kristensson (1987: 127) suggests that the last pockets of rounded /ø/ remained in Gloucs and Oxfords. The material is, however, inconclusive as regards the general direction of change: of the long vowel, Kristensson (1987: 159) concludes only that 'in the early 14th century ME /ø:/ was in the process of being unrounded in Sa, St, He, Wo, Wa, Gl and Ox, but still lingered on in certain areas or certain words', noting also the possibility of coexisting 'conservative' and 'advanced' speech.

The present material suggests a very long period of gradual unrounding and variation. In parts of SWML, including NW Gloucestershire and, probably, SE Herefordshire, the rounded vowel seems to have been lost, in some varieties, already in the thirteenth century. Throughout the fourteenth century, it seems that the digraphs <eo>, <oe> and <ue> were retained in conservative spelling systems and, since they are used with some accuracy in a few texts up to *ca* 1400, some pockets of living usage may have survived in places; on the whole, however, spellings indicating rounding are rare from the mid-fourteenth century on. A pocket of rounding may have survived in the N Herefordshire - S Shropshire area, where <eo> spellings seem to appear remarkably late. It was noted above that <eo> and <ue> formed part of the Harley 2253 scribe's repertoire, and two later texts from the same area, LP 7520 and the S Shropshire LP 4037, still show extensive use of <eo>. Both texts contain forms that may represent hyperadaptation; although such forms, in themselves, suggest a loss of distinction, they presuppose a model to start with, whether in the form of surviving spoken-mode variants or of orthographic tradition. On the other hand, in the LME period, it seems unlikely that the latter could have survived the former for any great length of time.⁶⁹

The development of y(:)

The traditional view of the development of OE /y(:)/ in ME dialects may be summarized as follows: *y* was at an early stage unrounded to *i* in the northern areas and part of the E Midlands, and to *e* in the Southeast and parts of the South, while it was retained in the remainder of the country, including the West Midlands. As with the unrounding of /ø(:)/, views of the eventual date of unrounding in the latter area vary. Jordan (1968: 65)

seems to assume that /y(:)/, became unrounded in the WML dialects no later than /ø(:)/ did, and possibly even earlier. The evidence presented both by Sundby and Kristensson suggests the contrary. According to Kristensson, whose material covers the period 1290-1350 in the entire West Midland area, /y(:)/ remained throughout this time in most of the area, including all the core SWML counties. Sundby, whose study covers Worcestershire during a much longer period, suggests that 'the unrounding process had been completed by the second half of the 15th c, but very likely it was in full swing considerably earlier' (1963: 122-123).

The general development of /y(:)/, as outlined above, is far from exceptionless, and lexical items show considerable differences both as regards the rate of change and the selection of variants. Jordan (1968: 65) seems to assume a longer retention of rounding in the long vowel, in parallel with the development of /ø(:)/. In addition, various factors seem to have affected the selection of variants; these include conditioning phonological environments as well as less mechanical factors, especially phonesthetic and therapeutic ones (for a discussion see Samuels 1972: 143-144). Distinction between these is not always possible, and different factors may work together; a case in point is **the development of OE *scyttan* to *shit*, explained by Jordan (1968: 67) with the influence of the preceding / ʃ/, and by Samuels (1972: 143) with a therapeutic avoidance of homonymy with *shit*.**

Most of the material collected for the development of OE /y(:)/ is presented in Appendix 3 (Item lists 135-166). An overview of the data is given in Figures 80a and 80b; the vowel symbols represent those used in main forms and regularly occurring variants. The items are limited to fifteen words, selected to include those most frequently attested and to illustrate some of the conditioning factors referred to above. The texts are divided chronologically into four groups: 1) thirteenth century, 2) early fourteenth century, 3) late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and 4) fifteenth century. Three texts, LPs 7310, 7340 and 7400 provide insufficient evidence and are excluded.

In the pre-1350 material (groups 1 and 2), OE /y(:)/ appears regularly as <u> in all environments, and there is in general no reason to assume any underlying loss. In particular, the regular <u> in MS Harley 2253 (LP 9260), which consists of texts copied

	pride	fire	hide	kiss	guilt	fill	hill
1)							
AB	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
J/7440	u	u	u	u	u	u	-
2)							
7410	u	u	u	-	u	u	-
9260	u	u	u	u	u	-	u
3)							
7260	i	i	-	i	i	i/u	i
7280	i	u	i/u	i	u	e/i	u
7300	uy	uy	uy	u	u	u/i	u
7320	u	uy	-	u	i/u	i/u/e	i
7330	uy	uy	u	u	u	u	u
7370	-	i	i/u	u	u	e/i	-
7380	i/u	uy	i	u	u	i	i
7391	i/uy	i/uy	i/uy	i/u	u	o	i
7430	u	uy	-	u	-	i	u
7450	i	i/u	i	i/e	u	u	u
7460	uy	uy	uy	-	u	u	u
7500	u	uy	-	u	u	u	u
7520	uy	uy	u/i	u	u/i	u	i/u
4)							
7350	i	i	-	i/u	-	i	i/u
7361	-	i	i	-	-	-	-
7420	i	i	i	-	i	u	-
7481	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
7510	i/uy	uy	i	i	i	i	i

Figure 80a: The reflex of OE *y(ɪ)* in the Herefordshire material.

	bury	merry	mirth	kind	kin	sin	little	shut
1)								
AB	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
J/7440	-	u	u	u	u	u	u	-
2)								
7410	-	-	-	u	u	u	-	-
9260	u	u	u	u	u	u/i	u	-
3)								
7260	i	-	-	i	i	i	i	u
7280	u/e	e	e	i	-	i	i	-
7301/2	u	e/u	u	i	i	i	i	u
7320	-	i/u	i/e	i/u	i	i	i	-
7330	u	u	u	i	i	i	i	u
7370	u	-	e	-	i	i	i	e
7380	u	u	u	i	-	i	i	-
7391/2	u	u	u	i	i	i	i	u
7430	-	-	-	-	u/i	i/u	u/i	u
7450	-	e	e	i	e	e	i	e
7460	e/u	-	u	i	i	i/u	i/uy	-
7500	u	u	u	i	i/u	-	u/i	-
7520	u	u	u	uy	i/u	i/u	uy	-
4)								
7350	e	e	e	i	-	i	i	i
7361	-	e	-	i	-	-	i	-
7420	e/u	-	i	i	i	i	i	i
7481	e/u	-	i	i	i	i	i	i
7510	u	e	u	i	i/u	-	i/uy	u/e

Figure 80b: The reflex of OE /y(ɨ) in the Herefordshire material

out of various dialects, including Northern and Kentish, indicates that spellings other than <u> were unacceptable to the scribe. Only the item 'sin' shows unrounded spellings in Harley 2253; the early unrounding in this word is confirmed by the later material, where virtually no <u> spellings survive.

The post-1350 material presents a more complex picture. In group 3, there is a marked difference between the development before /n/ and that in other environments: while the other items show a fairly even survival of the rounded vowel, with <u, uy> appearing as the main form in approximately two-thirds of the material, the items 'kind', 'kin' and 'sin' generally appear as <i>, with only a handful of N Herefordshire texts showing <u, uy>. There appears to be little difference in the rate of unrounding between the long and the short varieties, the former of which are, with some regularity, spelled <uy>.

Before /r/, spellings suggesting the unrounding of /y/ appear, almost without exception, as <e> rather than <i>. Some <e> spellings also occur in 'fill', and may suggest a tendency to lowering before /l/. The lack of <e> in 'hill' is unsurprising; as Samuels (1969: 327) has shown, homonymy with 'hell' tends to be avoided in most areas except for the extreme east. The <e> spellings in 'shut', on the other hand, may reflect avoidance of homonymy with 'shit'; otherwise, <e> appears only in LP 7450, where it reflects an element of south-eastern usage (see p 196 ff).

Group 4), finally, consists of texts that belong to the middle or latter part of the fifteenth century. In this part of the material, very few examples of <u, uy> remain, most of them occurring in LP 7510. While it is possible that the predominance of <i> (and, before *r*, <e>) might reflect the general scribal trend towards less regional orthography, it should be noted that a number of the texts, in particular 7350 and 7481, show, on the whole, a fairly strong regional colouring, including frequent <o> in *mon* 'man' in the latter. Thus, it would seem likely that /y(:)/ had mostly become unrounded by the second half of the fifteenth century, a conclusion that agrees with Sundby's conclusion from the Worcestershire material (see p 356).

The retention of a number of <u, uy> spellings in LP 7510 may simply reflect a very conservative orthography. However, the present material for 7510 shows no backspellings, and, as the text is a constrained translation from an EML exemplar (see p

222), the <u, uy> spellings may be assumed to be scribal. As LP 7510 was localized in an area where, it was suggested above, a pocket of /ø(:)/ may have survived until relatively late, it is quite possible that the present forms also reflect a genuine late survival of /y(:)/.

As with the loss of /ø(:)/, the diatopic direction of the loss within the SWML area is difficult to assess. Sundby (1963: 123) suggests that the loss might have taken place earlier in northern Worcestershire than in the southern part; however, the material is not conclusive, and Sundby's division of the material into two large groups, northern and southern, is of limited help. In the present material, there seems to be a difference between the northern/eastern and southern/western parts of Herefordshire: the texts localized in the areas south and west of the Wye show relatively few <u, uy> spellings. In the post-1350 material, two groups of texts show a particularly high proportion of <u, uy>: the *Piers Plowman* texts localized in the southeast (LPs 7301/2, 7320 and 7330), and the texts localized in the far north (LPs 7500, 7510 and 7520). Together with the early LP 7430, the latter also seem to reflect a relatively early stage of the unrounding before *n*, and tend to retain rounding in 'little'. Forms like *sunne* 'sin', *hytel* 'little' occur also in the northeastern LP 7460; they are, however, restricted to certain parts of the text, and the back-spellings *chuldren* 'children' and *tul* 'until' indicate that the scribe's own usage no longer retained /y(:)/.

On the whole, it seems that /y(:)/ was lost in most of the Herefordshire area in two successive stages: around the middle of the fourteenth century before nasals, and up to a century later in most other environments. The former change seems to have taken place considerably later in the north than in the south. During this period, it may be assumed that the usage varied greatly, both within the systems of individual speakers and between individuals and areas; as with /ø(:)/, it is probable that the rounding was retained in some isolated pockets even after it had been lost in most of the area.

6.3.2 Germanic *a* before nasals

The development of Germanic *a* is one of the most complex areas of OE and ME phonology. While a number of prehistoric sound-changes account for the orthographic forms in OE (<e>, <ea>, <æ>, <a>, <o>), the phonemic status of the different developments is controversial (see Hogg 1992: 14, 98 and references there cited), and most of them appear merged in *a* in ME. Two changes seem, however, to have been particularly typical for the West Midland area, and spellings that reflect these continue to appear in ME; these involve rounding and/or retraction of Gmc *a* before nasals and the so-called second fronting, which seems to have affected the reflex of Gmc *a* in most other environments. The evidence for these two developments in the Herefordshire material will next be considered.

While forms of the *mon* type seem to have been relatively widespread in OE, in the ME period they are restricted to the West Midland area.⁷⁰ The phonemic status of this *o* is controversial: for most dialects of OE, it may simply be considered an allophone of /a/; however, it is sometimes assumed to have been phonemicised in the West Mercian / West Midland dialect to a short-lived phoneme /ɔ/, which eventually merges with /o/ (see e.g. Sundby 1963: 198-199; cf. also Kuhn 1961: 534; Hogg 1982). It is here simply assumed that the WML *o* represents a vowel distinct from /a/, an assumption reinforced both by ME spellings and the evidence of PDE dialects; whether it should be considered to constitute a separate phoneme or have merged with /o/ is not strictly relevant for the present purpose.⁷¹

As noted in 5.4 (p 313 f), this feature seems to show a remarkable stability since the OE period: the distribution of pronunciations of *mon* with [ɒ] in the *SED* material is virtually identical to that of *mon* spellings in the *LALME* material (see map in Wakelin 1982: 8). Kristensson (1987: 211-213), like Moore, Meech and Whitehall (1935), considers /o/ before nasals to be a defining feature of the West Midland dialect area; according to him, ‘/mon/ reigned supreme in Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire’, while Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire were transitional areas, with /man/ in clear majority in the latter.

Kristensson's interpretation agrees, on the whole, with the *LALME* evidence (map 95 in *LALME* I: 328). However, while Kristensson includes the whole of Herefordshire into the /o/ area, the *LALME* material shows no evidence of *o* in the southern part of the county. The present analysis, for which all occurrences of the reflex of Gmc *a* before nasals were noted, fully confirms the *LALME* picture (see Figure 81).⁷² It was shown in 4.4 above that the *mon* type shows a clear-cut distribution boundary, which largely agrees with those of *uch(e)* 'each' and *wes* 'was', and seems to divide Herefordshire into two dialect areas: a north-eastern and a south-western one (see p 245). The lack of <o> spellings in the southern part cannot be coincidental, as the material analysed is copious, and includes several long texts considered in chapter 4 to provide good evidence (e.g. LPs 7280, 7320, 7370 and 7391/2).

The present material shows that spellings like *mon*, *nome* survive throughout the period in the northern and eastern parts of Herefordshire. Like all strongly regional dialect features, they occur most commonly in the early texts; however, they are still relatively frequent in the fifteenth-century. Figure 83 shows the occurrence of <o> in the *LALME* texts in N and E Herefordshire, on the basis of the most frequently occurring forms collected for the present study (for the full material see Appendix 3, Item lists 101-116); in the matrix, 'o' stands for <o> as a frequent or main spelling and '(o)' for a minor variant. It should be noted that 'name' and 'shame' must be assumed to have a lengthened vowel in all except the earliest texts, and that *o* in 'thank' also seems to have been relatively widespread in southern dialects; only the first three items may thus be considered to provide fully reliable evidence. The texts are divided chronologically into three groups: 1) thirteenth century, 2) early fourteenth century, and 3) later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The general trend of <a> supplanting <o> in the later texts may be assumed to reflect, at least in part, the uniformizing tendency arising from constrained selection on the part of the scribes. On the other hand, as Herefordshire would lie on the southern margins of the West-Midland /o/ area, a large amount of variation may be assumed; in particular in LPs 7330, 7350 and 7420, which are localized at the southern extremes of the /o/ area, the fluctuation may reflect the scribe's own usage. In the later material, the pattern of retention of *o* varies greatly between lexical items, and may reflect lexical

Figure 81

The distribution of o
for Germanic a before
nasals in the
Herefordshire material

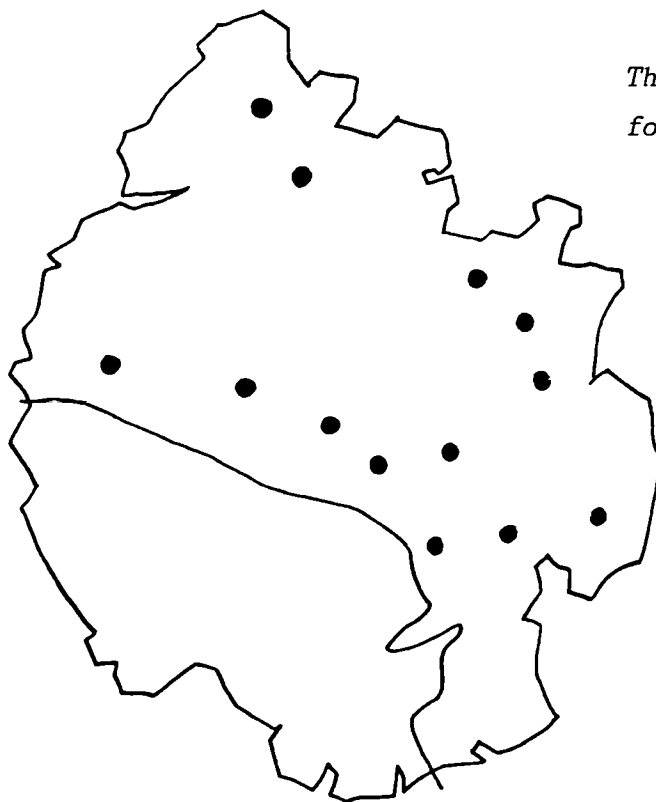
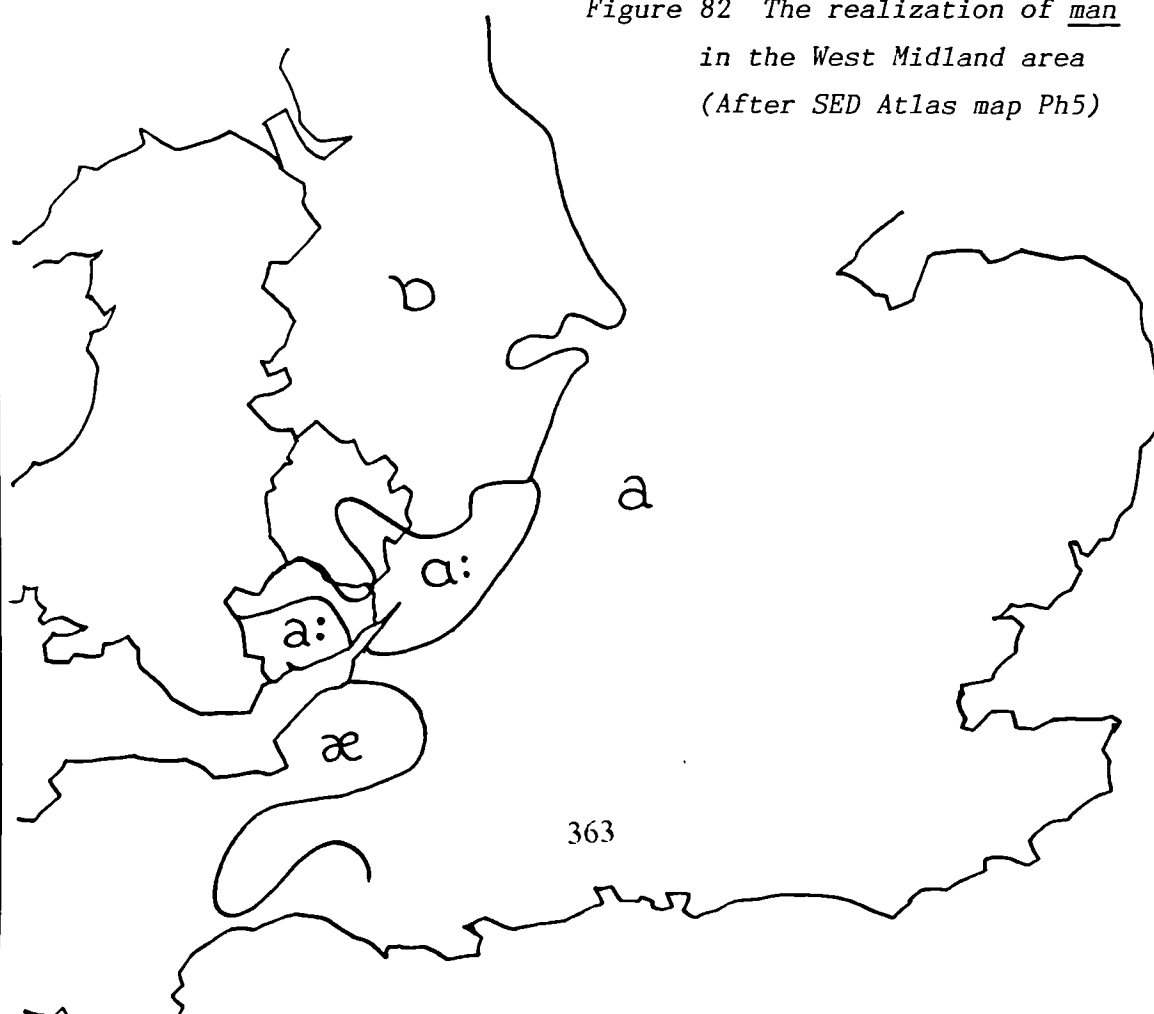


Figure 82 The realization of man
in the West Midland area
(After SED Atlas map Ph5)



	man	can	answer	name	shame	thank
1)						
AB	o	o	o	o	o	o
J/7440	o	(o)	o	o	o	o
2)						
7410	o	a	-	o	o	o
9260	o	o	a	o	o	o
7430	o	a	a	a	a	o
7340	(o)	-	o	o	o	-
3)						
7330	(o)	(o)	a	a	a	o
7350	(o)	(o)	o	(o)	a	(o)
7401	(o)	a	(o)	a	a	-
7420	(o)	-	(o)	a	a	(o)
7450	o	o	a	(o)	a	o
7460	a	a	a	(o)	a	(o)
7481	o	a	o	a	a	o
7500	o	(o)	o	(o)	a	o
7510	(o)	a	a	a	a	o
7520	a	a	a	a	a	a

Figure 83: Occurrence of <o> for Gmc a before nasals in N and E Herefordshire texts

diffusion in the boundary zone between the /a/ and /o/ areas. Apart from the frequent <o> in 'thank', spellings with <o> appear most commonly in *mon* 'man'; however, in the case of minor variants, this may, at least in part, simply reflect the much greater frequency of occurrences of 'man' compared with the other items.

For the southern part of the area, no <o> spellings are attested, even as minor variants. Similarly, in the *LALME* material, only <a> is attested in Monmouthshire, as well as in the western extreme of Gloucestershire, while the northern parts of the latter county show relatively numerous <o> spellings. That the earlier dialect surveys do not show this southwestern /a/ area is not surprising: documentary material for Herefordshire is very scanty, and the dialect of the Western borderlands has not been much studied. In Herefordshire, Kristensson's sources cover only a few villages, concentrated, it seems, in the north and east; he considered Monmouthshire of little interest because of its 'strong influence from Celtic', and deemed the omission of the area from his West Midland survey 'hardly of any significance' (Kristensson 1987: ix).

The boundaries drawn for the PDE situation in the *SED* map for *mon* (Orton *et al* 1978, Ph5) are of interest in this context. The boundaries of the medieval distribution of *mon*, as drawn by Moore, Meech and Whitehall, correspond virtually exactly to the combined area of realizations in [ɒ] and [ɑ:], as shown in the *SED* map (see Figure 82). The distribution of [ɑ:] spans a large part of Gloucestershire, N Monmouthshire and parts of S and E Herefordshire; to the north, [ɒ] occurs throughout the WML area, while [a:] appears in S Monmouthshire, and [a] in S Gloucestershire and all the areas to the east. The [ɑ:] type is clearly a boundary form between the other areas. Interestingly, the southern part of Herefordshire, which shows only <a> in the ME material, seems to show a mixture between [ɒ] and [ɑ:] in the PDE material; while this apparent change in the otherwise stable distribution may simply reflect the limitations of both the ME and PDE material, it is also possible that the evidence does reflect a southward spread of the *mon* type. In either case, most of Herefordshire must probably be considered a transitional area.

6.3.3 The ‘second fronting’

The OE sound change termed second fronting is most conveniently summarized by Hogg (1977: 70) as follows:

In those Old English texts normally assigned to the Mercian dialect of Old English, especially the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss... the short stressed vowels *e* and *æ* appear where *æ* and *a* are found in other dialects... This contrast is traditionally considered to be the result of a sound change in Mercian by which *æ* > *e* and *a* > *æ*, and this change is termed ‘second fronting’.

Hogg goes on to define the ‘major areas of dispute’ as regards second fronting as 1) its relative chronology, 2) its dialectal spread and 3) the phonological environment in which it occurs; a fourth problem, related to all the above, is ‘the question of what precisely the change was, that is, what was the phonological status of the sounds represented by *e*, *æ* and *a*’ (Hogg 1977: 70). For the present study, which is mainly concerned with the ME material, the relevant questions are 2 and 4, that is, dialectal spread and phonological status; these will be discussed below, with special reference to the Herefordshire material. Finally, a fifth question, that of the implementation of the change, will be considered.

Unlike the change before nasals, second fronting seems to have been dialectally restricted in OE, only the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss (VP) showing both changes regularly. Few examples of *e* from *æ* occur in the early Mercian glossaries, while the first scribe of the eight/ninth century Rushworth Gospels has <e> as a minority form (but see Smith 1996: 28-29; see also p 367 below). The later text of *St Chad* (MS Hatton 113; see p 307) has a majority of <e> spellings, as do a small number of early ME texts, including AB. The latter texts represent the most important corroborative evidence for the OE development seen in VP, with which they show a general linguistic similarity (see p 305 f). A change from *æ* to *e* also takes place in Kentish. Given the Canterbury connection of VP, a unity of the changes has been suggested; they seem, however, to belong to quite

different phonological developments and cannot be equated (see Hogg 1977: 74-75).

Spellings suggesting a fronting from *a* to *æ* are found in OE only in the Mercian glossaries and VP. For this change, ME texts yield little evidence, as *æ* and *a* have generally merged and appear as <a>. Exceptionally, the AB-language reflects a distinction, if imperfectly maintained, between *e*, *æ* and *a*, which appear as <e>, <ea> and <a> respectively; however, various intervening developments tend to obscure the evidence for an *a* > *æ* change (see d'Ardenne 1936: 181-183). The present discussion will, accordingly, concentrate on the *æ* > *e* change.

Before the main evidence for the change is considered, it may be noted that a number of texts that seem to contain an element of West Mercian / West Midland dialect show a mixture of <e>, <æ> and <ea> spellings, sometimes amounting to what appears to be a free interchange of the graphs. The significance of such variation is not always easy to assess; two examples of particular interest may, however, be noted.

Smith (1996: 28-29) discusses the use of <æ> and <e> by Farman, the Mercian scribe of the Rushworth gospels, drawing on the study by Kuhn (1945). It appears that Farman's normal spelling of Gmc *a* is <æ>, while <e> appears only exceptionally (in the proportion 25: 2); however, the spelling <æ> also appears for historical *e* with remarkable frequency (in the proportion of 5 *æ* to 9 *e*). Kuhn's suggestion, cited by Smith (1996: 29) is that Farman, trying to imitate West Saxon usage, 'introduced numerous Saxonisms... among them *æ* instead of *e* for [West Germanic] *a*', and then 'carried the imitation too far, and wrote *æ* frequently for [West Germanic] *e*'.

Smith suggests that Farman's usage represents a type of hyperadaptation, or hypercorrection, in the written mode. Interestingly, a similar pattern seems to occur in the twelfth-century MS Bodley 343, assumed (like Farman's text) to combine features of the LWS *Schriftsprache* and of a West-Midland variety, presumably the scribe's own usage (see p 308). According to Irvine (1993: lvii), the graphs <e> and <æ> are used more or less interchangeably in this text: <æ> often appears for <e>, while, less commonly, <e> appears for <æ>. While Irvine (1993: lxii) concludes that, because of the confusion of the two graphs, spellings like *creft* 'craft' 'cannot safely be held to reflect West Mercian second fronting', the variation is in itself of interest; in view of the dialectal characteristics of the text as a whole, the 'confusion' may well reflect a contact

between two systems and, possibly, a type of hyperadaptation similar to Farman's.

In ME, the $\text{æ} > e$ change appears relatively consistently in a small number of early texts, most of which are related to the 'AB-group', and have been localized in or near the Herefordshire area (see Figure 84). The AB-language itself shows <e> in most words where second fronting might be expected; however, some items show <ea>, either regularly (e.g. *glead* 'glad') or as a variant (e.g. *feder/feader* 'father nom sg', *hwet/hweat* 'what'). The variation is limited to certain lexical items, with no sign of a general tendency, as in Bodley 343, to equate the two graphs. The <ea> spelling for OE æ occurs in few texts outside A and B; the Royal MS (R) often shows <e> for AB <ea> as in *gled, feder*, but there are also counter-examples, e.g. *breas* 'brass', AB *bres* (d'Ardenne 1936). Lambeth 487 and the Cleopatra MS of *Ancrene Riwe* (Cl) both show the general ME trend, whereby <a> has come to correspond both to AB <ea> and <a>, with variation of forms like *gled/glad, hwet/hwat*.

Few other ME texts of the general Southwest-Midland area show unequivocal evidence for the second fronting. Most importantly, two Herefordshire texts of a later date, MSS Jesus 29 (LP 7440) and Harley 2253 (LP 9260), retain a large number of <e> spellings, even though virtually all have variants with <a>, and <a> is regular in most of the items that show fluctuation in AB, e.g. *fader, glad*. The other 'friars' miscellanies show much variation, at least some of which is text-conditioned: in the Caligula miscellany (C), the originally south-eastern poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* has <a> spellings only, while <e> is frequent in the shorter poems (see p 290). Digby 86 (D) seems to retain <e> fairly regularly at least in *heuede* 'had', *wes* 'was' and *feir* 'fair', while Trinity 323 (T) shows numerous occasional spellings like *efter* 'after', *feder* 'father'.

The general picture of the EME material seems to be that of a gradual transition from one system to another: diffusing through the lexis, variants with <a> appear alongside <e> and eventually oust the latter. In the LME material, few traces of e remain, and most involve low-stress words like 'was' and 'had'. Such traces appear in a number of Herefordshire texts, including LPs 7410, 7460 and 7500, as well as all the texts of the Prose *Brut*, LPs 7370, 7420, and 7481. The form *wes* appears as a dominant or frequent form in LPs 7350, 7401 and 7481.

MS/LP	after	craft	father	glad	had	was	what	fair
L	e	-	e	-	e	e	e/a	e
R	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
AB	e	e	ea/e	ea	e	e	e/ea	e
Cl	e	e	e/a	e/a	e	e	e/a	e
J / 7440	a	a/e	a	a/e	e/a	e/a	a	e/a
9260	a	a	a	a	e/a	e/a	e/a	e
7350	a	-	a	a	e/a	e	a	a
7481	a	a	a	a	a	e/a	a	e

Figure 84: The use of <e>, <ea> and <a> in 'second-fronting' words in some early and late ME texts of the SWML area

Figure 85

Distribution of e
in wes, hed



Weak-stress words like *wes* and *hed* have not generally been considered reliable evidence; the raising did not always seem to affect these in the Vespasian Psalter Gloss (e.g. *æt*, *wæs* alongside *et*, *wes*), and the vowel sound might in any case be expected to be weakened to schwa in unstressed position. However, certain correspondences suggest that these spellings should not be left entirely out of consideration. Those texts that show indisputable, if fluctuating, survival of second-fronting *e*, e.g. MSS Jesus 29 (J; LP 7440) and Harley 2253 (LP 9260), tend to preserve it most fully in frequently occurring words like *wes*, *hed*. Also, as Figure 85 shows, the distribution of forms like *wes* and *hed* in the *LALME* material shows a clear geographical coherence. The majority occur in the Southwest-Midland area, with the densest concentration in N Herefordshire and NW Worcestershire, and a more scattered half-moon of attestations running parallel with the Welsh border to Cheshire. The distribution is similar to, although more restricted than, that of *mon* ‘man’ (see Appendix 4, Map 40), and suggests a certain dialectal unity. This is further reinforced by the textual and dialectal connections of those Herefordshire texts in which the <e> spellings appear: the majority seem to go back to a Herefordshire original, or show an otherwise strong local background.

As both the southeastern and Southwest-Midland distributions of <e> shown in Figure 85 correspond with areas where earlier sound changes from *æ* to *e* are assumed to have taken place, these <e> spellings, even in low-stress words, are unlikely to be entirely fortuitous. However, in the late ME period they may simply represent traditional spellings; their significance as regards living usage is doubtful. While Wright and Wright (1928: 19) suggest a connection between the OE *e* areas and present-day pronunciation, such an equation does not take into consideration the phonemic status of the vowel; as regards the question of second fronting, the latter is of crucial importance, and should be considered.

In AB, the graph <e> represents both *e* from second fronting and *e* from other sources, while <ea> mainly seems to represent OE *æ*; however, as noted above, <ea> is also at times used in words where second-fronting *e* would be expected. d’Ardenne (1936: 181-86) suggests that *e* from second fronting had merged with *e* from other sources, and explains the variation of <e> and <ea> with the loss of an original distinction between /e/, /æ/ and /a/, the two former phonemes having merged. In all

essentials, this view has also been held by Dobson (1972: lxxiii-iv) and Hogg (1977: 72 and 1992: 139).

The main argument against this view has been the apparent reversal of sound-change involved in the eventual disappearance of the *e* by second fronting. It is generally accepted nowadays that such apparent reversals can take place where there is contact between different systems, and contact, at a late stage, is considered by Dobson (1972: lxxiv) to cause the present ‘reversal’: ‘The disappearance [of *e* from second fronting].. must have been due, not to phonetic change.. but to the displacement of the indigenous West Midland forms by those of other dialects’.

An alternative view is held by Zettersten (1965: 66-71) and Kristensson (1983, 1986, 1987: 39-42), following Ekwall (1963); according to them, second fronting had no long-term effect on the phonological system, the resulting *e* being simply a raised allophone of /æ/, and eventually merging with /a/. The place-name evidence supporting this view is persuasive; however, the argument is highly problematic, as it supposes a spelling distinction in direct conflict with the phonemic system, an assumption considered ‘entirely unreasonable’ by Dobson (1972: lxxiii).

A third possibility has been suggested by Jack (1990), who argues that the *e* from second fronting represents a separate phoneme, distinct both from /e/ and /æ/. Jack’s suggestion has the virtue of reconciling many of the problems inherent in the two former arguments; however, its principal weakness lies in the necessity of postulating a four-height system of short front vowels, creating, perhaps, a bigger problem than it solves.

A common feature of all the above arguments is the presupposition that the western variety in which second fronting took place was, at least to begin with, a homogeneous dialect. In the AB-language, d’Ardenne (1936: 204) sees an ‘indigenous and relatively undisturbed development, carrying on the native tendencies of Anglo-Saxon’; such views of isolation and homogeneity would generally seem to be associated with the western dialects. However, in light of the historical context surveyed in chapter 3, it seems unrealistic to assume that the early development of any SWML dialect could have been so ‘undisturbed’. Assuming, instead, a considerable amount of contact between different systems, it might be possible to reconcile the problematic aspects of second fronting.

Considering the distribution of the ME evidence, it seems most likely that N Herefordshire belonged to, or formed, the core area of second fronting; while S Herefordshire was still Welsh in the OE period, the areas to the southeast and east show many fewer traces of the change, and it may be significant that the latest surviving text that shows unquestionable survival of *e* from second fronting, MS Harley 2253, is placed, both on linguistic grounds and on the basis of manuscript connections, in the same N Herefordshire area as the text that provides the fullest ME evidence of the change, MS Corpus 402 of *Ancrene Wisse* (A) (see p 271).

It was shown in chapter 3 that the linguistic situation in Herefordshire was, in all likelihood, very complex during the OE and EME periods; in particular, a close coexistence of Welsh and English speakers seems to have continued for many centuries. It was noted that, in the first centuries of settlement, the majority of the people were probably Welsh-speaking, and that the proportion of English-speakers grew only gradually, with a mixed boundary area moving slowly towards the south and west. Archeological and place-name evidence suggest a broad contact zone, later appearing in the mixed legal and cultural systems of the Marcher region (see pp 47, 52).

It is to some extent surprising that few attempts have been made to relate specifically western features of past stages of the language to a language contact which undoubtedly existed, especially as the grammar and phonology of modern varieties in the area, as in the neighbouring parts of Wales, appears to show strong Welsh influence (Ellis 1889, cited in Ihalainen 1994: 240-241). This question will be considered more generally in Chapter 7 below (379 ff); for the moment, it is suggested that the contact between Welsh and English might account for the original implementation of the second fronting, and for the subsequent variation and restructuring evident both in the OE and EME texts.

The regional connections of second fronting are, firstly, suggestive. All the ME texts that show clear evidence of the sound-change are localizable within or near the borderland; apart from external evidence and localizations based on the *LALME* network, Welsh loanwords in the AB-group and in Harley 2253 connect these texts firmly with the border area (380). The later evidence shows a distribution pattern parallel with the border, most dense in the Herefordshire area, where the contact seems

to have lasted longest and been most intensive (see Figure 85). The possibility of a connection between this geographical pattern and Celtic influence was suggested very cautiously by Crowley (1986: 101), who, however concluded that ‘this cannot be demonstrated: as far as we can tell, the Celtic influence on Old English dialects was negligible’.

Secondly, there appears to have existed a systemic difference between OE and Old Welsh, that might account for the change. While OE in general had a three-way distinction between *e*, *æ* and *a*, the Welsh vowel system lacked an equivalent for *æ*. The Welsh *a* was a low-central vowel, systemically linked with a set of central vowels, while *e* was a mid-front vowel (Evans 1976: 1-2). Significantly, words that were borrowed into Welsh during the OE period regularly show *e* for OE *æ*. The following examples are given by Parry-Williams (1923: 26): *crefft* ‘craft’, *ffest* ‘fast’, *het/hed* ‘hat’ and *pres* ‘brass’. The forms may, of course, simply reflect borrowing exclusively from a variety that had already undergone second fronting; however, from a phonological point of view there is reason to believe that OE *æ* would have corresponded much more closely to *e* than to *a* in the Welsh system (Parry 1923: 24).

It could, then, be assumed that a merger of OE *e* and *æ* in *e* might similarly take place in a bilingual environment where a large Welsh proportion of the population was gradually adopting the OE language. In a society with intensive contact between two languages, but with relatively restricted mobility, it may further be assumed that such modified systems might survive the initial bilingual stage and remain in the English eventually prevalent in the area. These systems would continually come into contact with unmodified ones, and the available variation might be assumed to result in further change and reorganization.

The suggestion, as offered here, can naturally only be tentative. However, whether or not language contact between Welsh and English should be considered a reasonable explanation for the second fronting, the general assumption of different coexisting systems, some with merged *e* and *æ*, and some that distinguished *e*, *æ* and *a*, makes the question of the phonemic status of second-fronting *e* considerably less problematic. While an elaboration of the question must fall outside this study, the following points may be noted:

1) The appearance of *ea* for expected second-fronting *e* in the AB language does not need to be seen as a diachronic development of merger between the two phonemes, but as synchronic variation: contact between *e* - *a* and *e* - *æ* - *a* systems would be expected to result in various patterns of redistribution, leading to a fluctuation between vowel phonemes in some lexical items.

2) The onomastic evidence cited by Kristensson (1987: 30-42) and Ekwall (1963: *passim*) shows that phonetic development to ME *a* had taken place in a large number of place-names where second fronting might be expected. This does not, however, prove that *e* from second fronting did not merge with /e/, but only that the process had not affected these place-names; on the assumption of a homogeneous development, a number of <e> forms are, in fact, somewhat laboriously explained away by Kristensson (1987: 40). The assumption of coexisting patterns would allow for both types, making a postulated four-height vowel system unnecessary.

7 DIATOPIC AND DIACHRONIC PATTERNS

7.1 Diatopic patterns

In the previous chapter, an attempt was made to trace the development of some selected linguistic features in the Herefordshire dialect, on the basis of the material defined in parts I and II. The various approaches to the material employed in the present study may now be brought together. In what follows, a brief overview will be given of the main diatopic and diachronic patterns that seem to have emerged during the preceding chapters, together with a consideration of the possible factors relevant to their development.

Dialect geography has traditionally concentrated on the drawing of boundaries, and the criteria based on orthographic variation, defined in 4.4 above, were, for the sake of clarity, viewed as approximate isoglosses. However, it is well known that isoglosses and dialect boundaries impose artificial divisions on data: boundaries tend to be fuzzy rather than absolute, isoglosses do not typically coincide, and diatopic variation tends to form continua rather than discrete areas. This should be borne in mind when the diatopic patterns of the medieval Herefordshire dialect are considered.

It was noted in 4.4 above (p 245) that a large number of items show a distribution pattern that seems to divide Herefordshire into a north-eastern and a south-western half (see Figures 56 and 57, p 246). The forms limited to the north-eastern part include the *mon* 'man' type, the *uch* type for 'each' and spellings that seem to show traces of second fronting. In the earlier material, the *heo* type for 'they' shows a similar distribution, and it was noted in 6.2.5 that a third-person pronoun system with identical nominative and accusative forms in the feminine singular and plural paradigms was typical of the northern part of the area (see p 334). Many of the forms limited to the south and southwest are, on the other hand, typically southern ones that occur

throughout the southern counties; so *meny* ‘many’, *fram* ‘from’, *hi hy* ‘they’. The distribution boundaries that mark this north-south divide follow roughly the course of the Wye, except in the east and southeast, where they begin to fan out (see Figure 56, p 246). While there is no reason to assume that the river in itself would have constituted an important physical barrier for communication, its approximate correspondence with the earlier Welsh-English border is significant (see p 50). It is particularly notable that ‘West Midland’ type forms like *mon* ‘man’, *heo* ‘they’ are found in the eastern parts of Herefordshire and even the extreme north of Gloucestershire, but are entirely absent from the previously Welsh areas of the southwest, as well as from the extreme south of Herefordshire. These features may be assumed to go back to the varieties spoken by the Anglo-Saxon immigrants who, it was noted, did not settle south and west of the Wye; when the Welsh parts of Herefordshire were eventually anglicized, after the Conquest, the main element of English introduced to the area may be assumed to have derived from the south rather than the north and east.

No attempt is here made to relate dialectal differences to Anglo-Saxon tribal groupings like Mercian, Hwiccean and West Saxon, or to shadowy units like the Magonsæte; how far OE dialectal divisions coincided with tribal or political ones is uncertain, and the scanty information about any of these make the assumed connections largely meaningless. Some geographical patterns, which would at least partly seem to be related to the Anglo-Saxon settlement, may, however, be noted.

The usage of the extreme north of Herefordshire appears to have formed a distinctive subvariety, which seems to retain its special character through a long period of time. Several texts in the present material have been placed, both on linguistic and external grounds, in a limited area in the borderlands of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Radnorshire, in particular around Wigmore and Leinthall. These include the thirteenth century texts that contain the ‘AB-language’, MSS Corpus 402 (A) and Bodley 34 (B), as well as the somewhat earlier Lambeth homilies, the fourteenth-century Harley 2533 miscellany (LP 9260), and two later texts, LPs 7510 and 7520, of which the former dates from the middle or second half of the fifteenth century. The texts seem to share a very conservative phonology; it is notable that the last attestations of <a> for OE /a:/, of <e> in ‘second-fronting’ words, and of <eo> and <u> for the EME front rounded vowels, all

appear in texts localized in this area. Interestingly, Leeds (1985) lists a number of N Herefordshire features, which seem to differ markedly from the usage in the rest of the county, and agree more with the usage of the Northwest Midland counties (see p 315); while the available material does not allow for detailed comparison between ME and PDE forms, it seems that the N Herefordshire usage has remained distinct from that of the rest of the county.

The extralinguistic background discussed in chapter 3 suggests some correspondences. The immigration patterns of the first Anglo-Saxon settlers, shown in Figure 3 (see p 49), seem to have followed two main routes: a main wave from the southeast, spreading into eastern and central Herefordshire along the river valleys, and another wave following the course of the Teme from the northeast, spreading into the extreme north of Herefordshire and into S Shropshire. There may have been an original difference between the dialects of the N Herefordshire - S Shropshire area and the areas to the south, which could have been reinforced in the post-Conquest period, when the northern area formed a semi-independent marcher lordship under the Mortimers, their power centred in Wigmore and Richard's Castle.

It might thus be assumed that the distinctive character of the dialect of the extreme north of Herefordshire partly reflects early immigration patterns, while the central divide probably reflects the approximate limit of the main Anglo-Saxon settlement and the much later adoption of English in the southwestern parts. It is also notable that the main dialect continua in medieval Herefordshire seem to stretch to the north and northeast on the one hand, and to the south and southeast on the other, while continuity towards S Worcestershire is much less strong; it is probable that this reflects the relative break in settlement constituted by the Malvern Hills.

The southern character of the usage of the late anglicized areas of the south and southwest is paralleled by the shift in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Hereford texts to a more southern usage, suggested by Samuels (1984 [1989]: 258). In light of the important trading connections with Bristol and Gloucester, and the much higher population density in the areas to the south, a general southern influence during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries seems very probable.

7.2 Language contact: the question of Welsh

One of the most interesting questions about the dialect of Herefordshire is the extent to which its border situation and the contact between English and Welsh speakers may have contributed to its characteristics. Aspects of this question have been considered at several points in the study (see especially pp 148-49, 180-81, 373-74). For an overall assessment, the starting point must be that the contact, and its linguistic effects, is likely to have varied greatly in scope and character through time, as well as between different parts of the area. A distinction might also be made between borrowing and substratum influence, which may be assumed to affect different levels of language; however, in a bilingual context, both types may be expected, and cannot always easily be separated (Aitchison 1991: 113).

The influence on the English language of early Celtic contact is generally assumed to have been negligible, and reference is most often made to the extreme scarcity of Celtic loanwords in (Standard) English (see e.g. Baugh and Cable 1978: 74-75; Leith 1983: 18). It is, however, well known that, of two coexisting varieties, the more prestigious one does not, as a rule, borrow vocabulary from the other, and the lack of loanwords is thus hardly surprising. Serious study of Celtic influence has generally concentrated on syntax (see e.g. Preusler 1938); a creolization process between Celtic and English in the SW and SWML areas has been suggested by Poussa (1990), according to whom syntactic structures like the *do* periphrasis might go as far back as the earliest Anglo-Saxon-Celtic contact. Such arguments have not been generally accepted, and the assumption of a Celtic-English creole must be considered fairly implausible (see Görlach 1986 [1990]: *passim*). However, a widespread and prolonged contact between the languages must be assumed in the border areas, and it was suggested above that this contact was particularly intensive and lasting in the Herefordshire area (see pp 47-50, 56, 373).

It was argued in chapter 6 that the so-called second fronting, characteristic of some West-Midland varieties and, it seems, most strongly connected with the N Herefordshire area, could be explained by early language contact and bilingualism in the

area (see p 373-74). It is also possible that certain phonotactic similarities between Welsh and Herefordshire English, such as the avoidance of homorganic combinations of semivowel and vowel (as in *ooman* 'woman') originate as substratal phenomena (see Thomas 1994: 126); such questions require, however, much further study.

For the earliest periods of Welsh-English contact, the evidence is nonexistent or very scanty, and, even where a correspondence seems likely, the direction of influence is often unclear. For the period from ME onwards, the question of such contact has generally been considered to be of little interest. From the point of view of the mainstream history of English, Welsh influence has, on the whole, been dismissed as minimal, and affecting only marginal dialects (see e.g. Serjeantson 1935); such dialects, like those of Herefordshire or Monmouthshire, have, on the other hand, been considered uninteresting by dialectologists, historical and modern, on the grounds that they are *too* Celtic-influenced to provide good evidence for 'English dialects' (see e.g. Kristensson 1987: ix; Ellis 1889: 175). From the point of view of the more recent orientation of sociohistorical linguistics, the question might, however, be of more relevance.

In the present material, the most obvious Welsh influence is found in the material localized in the north and west, in particular the 'Mortimer country' cluster noted above. A considerable number of Welsh loanwords occur in these texts: the examples in the AB-language, *cader* 'cradle', *keis* 'henchmen' and *genow* 'lips, jaws' are well known, and it would seem unreasonable to exclude *baban* 'baby' (d'Ardenne 1936: 179; Dobson 1976: 115-16). Probable loanwords in Harley 2253 are *miles* 'animals', *wolc* 'hawk' and *crouþ* 'string instrument' (Brook 1956: 80). The loanwords must, of course, be assumed to go back to the original composition; nevertheless, their appearance in these particular texts is suggestive.

Certain orthographical features typical of the early Herefordshire texts, in particular AB, seem to show correspondences with medieval Welsh usage (see p 274); while the direction of influence is difficult to determine, it would seem to suggest a degree of contact and bilingualism. Much later examples of Welsh-English literate bilingualism appear in two texts localized in W Herefordshire, LPs 7401/2 and 7481/2. The first of these, consisting of the late fourteenth-century writings by William Swynderby, copied into the register of bishop John Trefnant, seem to be partly spelled

according to Welsh conventions, and it was suggested that they reflect the work of a Welsh scribe unaccustomed to copying English (see p 180 f). Biographical information relating both to Swynderby and the bishop also suggests considerable Welsh-English contact, both within the church and within the Lollard movement (see p 163 f).

The second text, a fifteenth-century copy of the Prose *Brut*, contains a number of scribblings relating to manors in W Herefordshire; the majority of names cited are either fully or partially Welsh, or English with the Welsh patronymic marker, e g *Jenkin ap Richard*. The manuscript also contains two short pieces of verse in Welsh. It is less certain how far the peculiarities of spelling shown by the main scribe should be related to a Welsh-speaking context (see p 148 f).

A general point to be made from these examples is that they reflect a presence of written, and literary, Welsh, a contact situation essentially different from that involving Welsh nursemaids and servants, assumed by Dobson to account for the loanwords in the AB-language (1976: 324). The evidence certainly does not warrant the assumption that Welsh-speaking scribes were very common in Herefordshire, or that contact between the two languages remained extensive in the ME period in all or most parts of the area. However, that evidence of such scribes, and such contact, exists at all is of interest in itself. It is, in any case, probable that contact between speakers (and writers) of the two languages was, throughout the ME period, mainly restricted to a few specific geographical areas: the marcher lordships, where active bilingualism appears to have survived for a considerable time; the Welsh district of Archenfield, still referred to as 'East Wales' by Robert of Gloucester;⁷³ and the city of Hereford, which seems to have held a considerable immigrant population of Welsh-speakers throughout its history (see Sylvester 1969: 352).

7.3 Tradition, innovation and continuity

Another important feature of the Herefordshire material, noted in the preceding chapters, is the interaction between tradition and innovation that characterizes it throughout the ME period. In chapter 5, it was shown that the thirteenth century forms a crucial period as regards the transition from traditional, OE-derived spelling systems to the more regionally variable LME orthography, and that this transition is strikingly illustrated by the four ‘friars’ miscellanies’ of the last quarter of this century (see p 299 ff). In chapter 6, it was further shown that this transition is not confined to orthography: the breakdown of the OE systems of gender and case, as retained in the written language, is also illustrated by the friars’ miscellanies, of which the most conservative ones retain the OE structure almost intact. What looks like the relatively sudden loss of the structure in the late thirteenth century appears to be paralleled by a large number of more or less simultaneous ‘losses’ in morphology and orthography, and might be interpreted in terms of the breakdown of an EME diglossic situation, in which the colloquial spoken language had become very different from the written variety.

The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts show, accordingly, a state of language very different from that of the late thirteenth-century material, and must, on the whole, be assumed to reflect much more closely the contemporary spoken variety. At the same time, certain traditional spellings seem to have been retained in the area for a long time, especially if they served a functional purpose; for example, it was suggested in chapter 6. that the spelling *heo* ‘she’ was in some varieties retained long after the vowel had become unrounded, as it provided a useful gender distinction in writing (see p 354). Some indications about the difference between colloquial and literary language are provided by the scribal translation of the *Piers Plowman* C-text contained in LP 7320 (see pp 111 ff, 119); inferences that can be drawn from the changes made by the translator include the loss of gender distinction between ‘he’ and ‘she’, the more frequent use of periphrastic constructions in colloquial language, and the literary or learned character of a large number of lexical items.

The material shows little influence of standardisation, even in the later fifteenth-

century texts. While some tendency to colourlessness, or ‘the purging of grosser provincialisms’ may be assumed to be present from an early stage, the major linguistic developments evident in the material would in general seem to correspond to language change in the spoken mode: examples of such developments include the discontinued use of the graphs <eo>, <u> *etc* for the EME front rounded vowels (see p 348) and a beginning loss of specific plural forms in the auxiliary verbs, in particular the modals (see Appendix 3, Item lists 265, 269, 273, 276, 278). On the other hand, numerous spellings, both regular and sporadic, that are untypical of traditional SWML orthography and unlikely to correspond to changes in the spoken language, appear in the later material. These include forms like *hand*, *land*; ‘northernisms’ like verbal endings in *-es*, and possibly even the pronoun *she*; while not yet indicative of a general standardization process, they seem to reflect the more fluid interchange between regional orthographies that is characteristic of the late and post-ME period (Samuels 1981 [1988]: 90; see also p 239 above).

On the other hand, comparison between the LME materials and the available evidence for the ModE dialect of Herefordshire suggests a general continuity and stability in the spoken dialect, both as regards the retention of individual conservative features and in the continuation of general trends of change (see pp 313-14); the general patterns of diatopic variation also seem to have remained relatively stable. This may largely be seen to reflect the rural character and relative isolation of the area since the sixteenth century.

8 CONCLUSION

It has been attempted in this study to approach a limited part of the expanse of Middle English dialect material, and, by applying the methodology developed in connection with *LALME*, to build up a picture of a particular variety, the medieval dialect of Herefordshire. The emphasis has been on the detailed study of individual texts, with the aim of contextualizing the evidence and assessing separately the value of each text; as stated in the Introduction, such an approach is seen as essential if the data are to be interpreted in a meaningful way. The evidence has then been related to the dialectal materials of earlier and later periods. The following specific objectives have been achieved:

- 1) As the main source material, texts contained in twenty-five fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts were subjected to detailed dialectal analysis. Most were found to provide reliable evidence for the dialect of Herefordshire, while four scribal texts were discarded as unsuitable for use.
- 2) New localizations were carried out for each text, taking advantage of the completed and published *LALME* material. The localizations, based on different selections of items and, in general, a fuller coverage of the material, were mainly found to agree with those in *LALME*. Some minor modifications to the map of localized texts were suggested.
- 3) Inferences about scribal behaviour and late ME orthography were drawn from the analysed material, and the major external influences on the Herefordshire texts were traced. Some interesting linguistic and textual findings were discussed. These include: an example of very thorough translation on the levels

of lexis and syntax, of great potential interest for ME word geography; spellings based on Welsh orthography that appear to provide early evidence for the Great Vowel Shift; some interesting textual and dialectal correspondences in versions of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*; and a possible identification of an EML dialectal element with the language of Lydgate.

4) A set of dialect criteria was defined, delimiting the distinctive usage of the Herefordshire area as well as regional subdivisions within the county, and providing a means for localizing ME texts within the Southwest Midland area.

5) The material was related to OE, EME and ModE dialect materials. The evidence for EME was considered in detail. The dialectal structure and status of important thirteenth-century texts, including AB, the Lambeth homilies and the miscellanies contained in MSS Jesus 29 and Caligula A ix were discussed, and localizations suggested for each usage. The possibilities for comparison with the OE and ModE periods were considered, and the continuity of dialectal features and patterns between the medieval and modern usages of Herefordshire was shown.

6) A series of interpretative studies, focusing on specific areas of grammar and phonology, were carried out. The topics considered include the development of the systems of gender, case and number in the post-OE period, the ME front rounded vowels and the development of Germanic *a*. A language contact-based explanation of the OE sound-change known as 'second fronting' was suggested.

7) Diatopic and diachronic patterns in the Herefordshire dialect material were related to the external context, and some historical factors of particular importance for the development of the dialect were suggested. Developments specific to the written language, with implications for the interpretation of the evidence, were noted and related to changes in literacy, as well as to more general social change.

The study of the material has involved much selection, both as regards the initial collection of data and its interpretation. While the aim has been to concentrate on features of particular relevance and illustrative power, much material of interest remains untouched; some is reproduced in the Appendices. The sheer scale of the material and the possibilities involved in Middle English dialects study is, for the present writer, the most important insight gained from the work, and it is hoped that some of this is conveyed in the preceding chapters.

It is also hoped that the present work can make a twofold contribution to the study of Middle English dialects. Firstly, as part of a series of regional studies, it has aimed to provide a sizeable body of data, and an account of the most distinctive characteristics and patterns, for a little studied but very interesting dialect. Secondly, it has attempted to demonstrate, or at least try out, some possible approaches for the interpretative study of Middle English dialect materials, building on the framework provided by *LALME*. It is a vast field and the work is still at an early stage; it is hoped that the present study has been able to suggest some of the exciting possibilities for the future.

Notes

1. A number of seminal articles that develop and demonstrate the *LALME* methodology are collected in Laing (1989) and Smith (1988). Important articles are also contained in Benskin and Samuels (1981) and Riddy (1991); in particular, a comprehensive practical summary of the methodology is provided by Benskin and Laing (1981) in the former collection. An overall summary is also given in the introduction to *LALME* (I: 3-36).
2. The definition for 'document' and 'documentary text' used here follows that given in the *Catalogue of Sources for LAEME* (Laing 1993: 3-5): 'legal and administrative writings such as charters... writs, grants, wills, papal letters, diplomas, manumissions and laws'. 'Literary texts' are any works in prose or poetry not included in the above.
3. Some features cannot, of course, be classified with certainty as either one or the other, e g later ME *heo/he* 'she'; cf p 342, 354.
4. Much of the following discussion is based on the important article 'Translations and *Mischsprachen* in Middle English manuscripts' by Benskin and Laing (1981), which should be referred to for a fuller account.
5. This term, and the following examples, are not used by Benskin and Laing (see note 4).
6. For a discussion of the background and function of Offa's Dyke and its relation to the political boundary, see Gelling 1992: 102 ff.
7. See note 1.
8. For example, very minor variants are excluded from the maps, even though they may appear as main variants in *LALME* (e g *wes* for *was*, see p 28). Similarly, the data for the thirteenth-century MS Jesus 29, here excluded from the main material (see p 24) is not entered on the maps.
9. The manuscript clearly reads 'herforde'. Ayscough (1782: 564) gives Hertford, repeated by Bennett (1944: 4), Brown *et al* (1951: 1838) and Taavitsainen (1988: 171). The *LALME* entry has Hereford.
10. The sigla used here are those chosen by Skeat (1866) and followed by most writers since; as these will be more generally familiar than the *LALME* LP codes, and better suited for comparison with C-text manuscripts not used in *LALME*, they are used to refer to the manuscripts throughout section 4.2.4.
11. Or the fourth one, if the so-called Z-version is held to represent a first, independent authorial version (see Rigg and Brewer 1983).

12. The alternation is clearly connected with the loss of the medial fricative in the spoken mode; the text contains numerous hypercorrect forms like *abou3t* 'about', *hou3* 'how', *nou3* 'now'.
13. See Benskin and Laing (1981: 96-97). One of the best-known examples of lexical translation, from a northern to a West-Midland dialect, is found in MS Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.8 of *Cursor Mundi* (see Kaiser 1957; also McIntosh 1963 [1989]: 27).
14. MS K begins at Passus II 217; the preceding part of the text is consequently compared with X, S only, as well as with the notes in Schmidt (1995).
15. See note 13.
16. The northern lexical items that occur in alliterative position (e.g. *kerke*, *kirke*, *kyrke* 'church') go back to authorial usage and are not relevant here; they should, of course, be disregarded as evidence for the dialect.
17. As Lutz (1991: 30-34) notes, the change could be described either as the loss or voicing of a segment, depending on whether *hn*, *hl*, *hr* are to be considered as a combination of aspirate and sonorant or as voiceless *n*, *l*, *r*. For the present purpose, all that is relevant is whether or not the spelling reflects a surviving distinction in the spoken mode, whatever its precise character, and the question can thus be ignored.
18. Sporadic later examples include a short fifteenth-century piece of verse (*Whan þe nybyng is ded*), in which the spelling distinguishes between the rhyming words *hloue* 'loaf' and *loue* 'love', and, perhaps significantly, *lhene* in an unspecified manuscript of the *Piers Plowman* A-text.
19. It is of some interest that all these forms, as well as *streynthe* and *brann-*, also appear in the medical manuscripts analysed as LPs 7290 and 7361/2 (see p 82 ff). The combination of what seem to be exotic and strongly local forms, common to these medical texts, is intriguing and needs further study.
20. For a full discussion of the texts see Kengen 1979: 3-12.
21. All three scribal texts share a number of distinctive W-features, including the use of yogh in words like *ou3t* 'out', *smy3te* 'smite' and *whi3te* 'white', as well as frequent use of <oo> in words like *oonliche* 'only', *oopen* 'open'.
22. The LPs for the X and Y stretches are denoted by the codes 7401 and 7402 respectively. Of the short mixed stretch on fol 99r, forms in clear agreement with either usage have been entered in the respective profiles; ambiguous or uncertain forms have not been entered.
23. For example, of the texts in *Fourteenth-century Verse and Prose* (Sisam 1921), only the Towneley (or Wakefield) Plays, which represent a S Yorkshire dialect, show the use of *to* as a conjunction. The form has been related to OE *to-þæs-þe* 'until' (Sisam 1921: 427), but may also reflect a NML pattern of functionally equating *to* and *til*.

24. A well-known example is the speech of the northern students in Chaucer's *The Reeve's Tale*. Smith (1995) has related some of the forms used by Chaucer to represent northern speech to the northern vowel shift, the progress of which was considerably earlier than that of the southern shift.
25. The poem appears as no 17 in Brown (1957) and is listed as number 7 by Gneuss (1960); see also p 352 and note 67.
26. The data for MS Caligula A xi are derived from the extract printed in Bennett and Smithers (1968: 159-164).
27. Hudson's examples suggest that MS Caligula A xi and the B-stretch of Harley 201 (the A stretch is not included in her study) agree against most other MSS in the use of various forms, e g *heo* 'she'; *hii* (Caligula) or *hij* (B) 'they'; *ss-* for 'sch-' and the retention of the inflected article; the two texts also tend to be grouped together for shared textual readings. Hudson does not, however, make this point, and it may be coincidental.
28. The folios analysed from Book IV are nos 5-9 and 25-29, counting from the beginning of the Book. The paper copies from which the analysis was made do not show folio numbering.
29. This type is prominent in MS Bodley 959, which also contains elements both of Herefordshire usage and CMS. Samuels (1969 [1989]: 139) considered the use of doubled vowels alien to Herefordshire.
30. Because of the frequency of these spellings, forms like *3yelde*, *hiegh* (7510) and *fier*, *3ielde*, *hiegh*, *hiere* (7520), should probably be assumed to represent ME /e:/ rather than /i:/.
31. Apart from the text copied by the main scribe, the only English text in MS Harley 2253 consists of some recipes added on fol 52v.
32. Several articles connected with the *LAEME* project contain important discussions of these questions: see especially Laing (1991); Smith (1991, 1992).
33. A good example of the retention of OE orthographic conventions is the <e> used in words like *scheome* 'shame' in AB and related texts. It is a purely orthographic convention, indicating the palatal quality of the preceding consonant sound; combined with the ME <sch> spelling, it is redundant, and can only reflect the continuity of OE tradition.
34. On the names *Ancrene Wisse* and *Ancrene Riwe* see Dahood (1984:2). For full lists of the texts see Millett (1982: xiii f); Dahood (1984: 2).
35. The term is here used for convenience, but it should be noted that at least Digby 86 (D) is now considered to be a layman's collection (see Miller 1963; Tschann and Parkes 1996).

36. The most recent dating of MS D (Tschann and Parkes 1996) places it either in the late thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth; the text may thus be somewhat later than traditionally assumed.
37. See note 34.
38. So e.g. Bella Millett (1982: xiv): ‘although the language of the surviving texts varies, all appear to have been written originally in the same variety of Middle English, usually described as “language AB”’.
39. According to Hulbert (1946: 411), the lack of mention in the Corpus version of the three sisters, for whom the treatise was assumed to have been written, presupposes that the sisters had died, and that a considerable time had passed. It naturally presupposes no such thing; rather, the address to the sisters would be superfluous, even confusing, in a version not intended for their use. Furthermore, the address, found only in the Nero MS, could at least arguably be an addition, tailoring one particular text to its intended users.
40. See e.g. Thompson (1958): li; cf also note 38.
41. Another conventional distinction observed in AB (with a number of exceptions especially in B) is that between *godd* ‘God’ and *god* ‘good’ (see d’Ardenne 1936: 2 n 8, 95). See also note 33.
42. Sisam (1951: 106-107) calls the two groups A and B; to avoid confusion with MSS A and B (Corpus 402 and Bodley 34), a different usage is adopted here.
43. See note 41; see also p 263.
44. This would provide an example of the fallacy in assuming that a more conservative language must necessarily reflect an earlier date; see Laing (1992) and p 282 in the present study.
45. Lines 1176-1182 contain a number of forms generally restricted to B; the usage is slightly mixed and may be assumed to reflect the scribe’s gradual adjustment to the change.
46. See note 45; for the concept of ‘transfer usage’ see p 38.
47. The LPs are based on the material of the following MSS: London, British Library Harley 201 (LP 7080; Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*); Cotton Caligula A xi (LP 7100; Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*); Egerton 2810 (LP 7110; *South English Legendary*). For a discussion of the two former texts, see p 206 ff.
48. e.g. *mankenne*: *penne* (line 683); *sede*: *bede* (line 357). See Bennett and Smithers 1968: 262-64.
49. See note 36.
50. See note 36.

51. See references in Hogg 1992: 8. It may be noted that OE charter evidence relating to the Herefordshire area is extremely scanty; with the corresponding scarcity of ME documents, a charter-based study of the dialect is not feasible. On the dangers of using small numbers of charters as evidence for dialect study see Lowe (forthcoming). A promising approach to OE dialects, using the more plentiful evidence of charter bounds, has been demonstrated by Kitson (1990, 1993).
52. See Samuels 1972 [1988]; Smithers 1983. Minkova (1991) has related the LME retention of adjectival final -e to the concept of 'eurhythmy'.
53. All forms collected for L that may be considered scribal are shown in the paradigm. The instrumental forms were even in OE largely used in set combinations like *for þon* and *for þy*. These remained, fossilized, throughout most of the period; however, the forms cannot be considered a living part of the determiner system, and are not included in the ME paradigms.
54. The two examples of *þen þan volke* are exceptions. Initial h- and, sometimes, w- are classed as vowels. Both are silent in the present-day dialect of Herefordshire, and may already have been in the process of disappearing at this stage.
55. The loss is not surprising in the case of MS Harley 2253, which seems to represent the dialect, a hundred years later, of the same area as AB (see p 271). The only traces of inflected 'the' in Harley 2253 occur in *King Horn* (*þene heþene kyng*, *þen deþ*, fol 84r; *þene gode kyng*, fol 88r and *þene castel*, fol 92r), and belong to the southeastern relict usage characteristic of this text (see also notes 61, 62).
56. A parallel example of the seemingly abrupt loss of an archaic distinction might be seen in the retention of adjectival inflexion by Chaucer, but not by Lydgate (see Samuels 1972 [1988]: 10).
57. An intermediate system, whereby *þe* and *þat* are used for animate and inanimate antecedents respectively, seems to be present in AB (see McIntosh 1947-48). All later texts, including Jesus 29, show fully generalized relative *þat*.
58. The *those* type, with final -s, appears only as a minor variant in the late LP 7420 (see p 145). This form, which is rare in present-day varieties outside standard usage, seems to have arisen by analogy in the late ME period, the plural ending -s, regular in nouns, being added to the form *þo*. Its selection in the standard variety has been explained by its correspondence 'to an ancient contrastive usage ("ablaut"), whereby front vowels correlated with nearness (thus *these*) and back vowels with distance (thus *those*)' (Smith 1996: 46).
59. Wright (1905), Leeds (1985) and Upton *et al* (1994) give the ModE forms *them* (*there*) and *they* (*there*), as well as the demonstrative pronoun *themmen*; the forms *thick*, *thicky*, *thuck*, *thucky* from the ME *thilke thulke* type seem to have become restricted to the singular.

60. The survival of the construction *þis beoþ* (these are), where plural number is signalled by the verb, is significant here.
61. AB preserves a few relict forms, sometimes corrected (e.g. *ha* to *hire* in Bodley 34, fol 19r). The fourteenth-century MS Harley 2253 (LP 9260) has a few examples of the accusative singular masculine form *hyne* (fols 89v, 90r); these occur as relicts in the originally southeastern text *King Horn*. See also notes 55 and 62.
62. The minor variants *hij* and *hy* occur in two originally southeastern texts, *Gregorius* and *King Horn* (LPs 7430 and 9260) respectively, and should not be included here.
63. Similarly, in LP 7301, <ue> is restricted to *hue* 'she', and OE *eo* appears otherwise as <e> throughout.
64. The forms *þheo s.þheo* occur only at the beginning of LP 7330, and may be left out of consideration.
65. A further problem with Leeds' statement is that it reverses the distinction between emphatic and unemphatic use suggested by Wright (1905: 271) and the *SED* evidence (cited in Duncan 1972: 190), according to which the object forms functioning as subject are restricted to unemphatic use. However, Leeds' example phrase (*her stayed but him didn't*) rings true, and probably reflects a selection of *(h)im* as a distinct form from *(h)er* when the two are juxtaposed, rather than general stressed/emphatic use: compare the alternative *er stayed but er didn't*.
66. Possibly also <u>; see Sundby 1963: 145-46.
67. It is notable that <eo> occurs towards the end of the poem *Heyl leuedy se-stoerre bryht* (Item 7 in Gneuss 1960) and in the beginning of next poem (Item 8); this reinforces Gneuss' view (1960: *passim*) that Item 7 stands out from the rest, and may not have been composed by Herebert.
68. The situation in Modern Finnish, the pronoun system of which does not distinguish gender, might be compared here: the lack of distinction is a notorious problem for writers and translators of literature, who often have to resort to the tedious substitution of pronouns with a variety of nouns in order to avoid ambiguity; no such problems arise in speech.
69. It is possible that a further indication of the late survival of /ø(:)/ somewhere in the S Shropshire - N Herefordshire area might be found in the orthography of the London scribe and publisher, John Shirley (1366-1456). The core of shared usage in the surviving manuscripts copied by Shirley appears to contain some fairly archaic features, including retained <eo>. A tentative localization of Shirley's usage somewhere in or near the S Shropshire area has been suggested by Margaret Connolly (1996).
70. In Old English, spellings of Gmc *a* before nasals vary greatly according to dialect and date: <o> spellings are common in most dialects in the early material, and become mainly restricted to the 'Anglian' dialects in the later OE period (see Hogg 1992: 78). Their

status in Kentish has been the subject of much controversy. Toon (1983) argued for a connection between <o> spellings and Mercian political influence; his methods have, however, been criticized by King (1992) and Lowe (forthcoming).

71. The latter possibility - merger with /o/ - would seem preferable for a number of reasons, including avoiding the assumption of a four-height system of short vowels in the back series; it would, moreover, parallel the development here assumed for the 'second fronting' in the front series (see section 6.3.3).

72. The map shows the evidence for questionnaire items 101-108 (see Appendix 1). Items where the nasal is part of a lengthening homorganic cluster, e.g. 'hand', 'lamb' are not included, nor are special cases like 'many'.

73. Fol 43v in MS Harley 201 (LP 7500).

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List of medieval manuscripts

All the medieval manuscripts discussed and analysed in Part II are listed below. They are listed in alphabetical order according to repository, followed by their contents and the codes and sigla used in the present study.

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